

# Summary of Discussion on Trail Fees

KY Equestrian Trail Summit – January 29, 2011  
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## **What might be the purpose of such a fee or permit system? Its benefits or costs?**

### *Possible benefits*

The current system allows many to ride on the trail building and trail maintenance efforts of a few

The current system allows "free riders" to enjoy the efforts of others without contributing to maintenance and enhancement

A permit system requires everyone to contribute to maintenance and enhancement of trails

A KY system could be designed as in other states to encourage the establishment and growth of horse clubs

Grants could be provided only to state approved incorporated clubs who "manage" a minimum number of miles of trail

In Maine, a state-approved club must manage a minimum of 5 miles of trail in order to receive \$3000 grant for trail maintenance. The grant potential increases by \$500 for every 5 miles increase in trails managed and tops off at \$5000

Club members could get a discount on the cost of their permits

If monies are returned to stated-approved organized clubs for trail construction and/or maintenance, if this occurs on public lands, the local horse clubs will gain a greater voice/influence on the decisions of public lands managers

A permit system provides an opportunity to collect basic data on trail riders in Kentucky, e.g., number of riders, where they ride, etc.

If this permit system will produce a method for addressing the liability concerns of private land owners, it is possible that we might open new private lands for trail use

### *Possible costs*

There is an unknown potential cost to management of such a system for in-state riders versus tourism/out-of-state riders

There is an unknown potential cost if other types of trail users generate more revenues than do horse riders because influence and credibility with public land managers and policy-makers is often based on revenues generated

The costs and benefits will be determined in part by the decisions on how the monies will be used in support of trail riding

**What would be a reasonable cost or fee structure from your perspective? (other states doing between \$10-50)?**

*Should you be able to purchase a day option?*

*Should everyone be required to purchase an annual pass?*

Trail riders are willing to pay up to \$75 or more IF they know that the majority of the funds generated will go directly for trail development, maintenance and enhancement

In other words, how the funds will be used will influence how much trail riders are willing to pay

There was a sense that if 25% of the fee was allocated for administrative purposes and 75% to trail use, this would be acceptable. Or, it would need to be similar to the administrative costs in other states

It was noted that the simpler the administrative structure, the less costly it will be

If this is a permit system for ATV, horse, and mountain bike riders then it is critical that the fee structure be specific to types of users and possibly, specific to types of trails (i.e., public, private)

Consider site based fees that will keep money "at home" in the county/location where generated

In other states the fees range from \$45 to \$85 a year

Example, in Maine the fee is \$55 allocated as follows:

\$15 in grants to state-approved clubs for trail maintenance and enhancement  
\$40 for administration/clerical costs (one full time person at state level) and enforcement

In Maine, out-of-state snowmobile riders pay \$15 extra for trail use

**What would be the most efficient way of purchasing such a permit?**

Must do a cost/benefit analysis of all the options for sale of permits in order to find the method that is least expensive in terms of administrative costs but greatest in accessibility for purchase

Use an existing system such as:

Contract with Fish and Wildlife permit system

Contract with Division of Motor Vehicles and purchased when you get your vehicle license

Use convenience stores as places to purchase permits

Manage through on-line purchases primarily or only to make it easy for out-of-state riders to acquire permits

Possibly do as a trailer or a rider annual fee

Need to provide easy way for those who don't know about the need for a permit to be able to purchase one if they arrive at a trail head

**How do you think the money should be used? Who should have input on this decision?**

Existing trail maintenance and enhancement

Infrastructure development on trails with permanent public access - but only on lands for which there is a guarantee of permanent access such as an easement on private lands

Development of new trails on public lands

This would help address the unequal distribution of public use trails across the state (e.g., lack of trails in urban and northern KY)

Access to/development of trails on private lands

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Acquisition of statewide liability insurance for:

Volunteers who build and maintain trails

Coverage for private land owners who permit public access to trails on or through their lands

Administrative costs

Management of sale of permits/tags

Enforcement

Public education/marketing program  
Use a grants program to distribute funds to clubs that manage trails and contribute volunteer time to this effort

Organize like KY Heritage grants and disperse through the state to groups who maintain and build trails

In the legislation establishing a permit system it is imperative that how the monies will be distributed between trails and administration

Establish a grant application process (like RTP) that would provide funding for state-approved organized clubs that manage trails

Such grant income could be used to access/match other grant monies (e.g., federal trail dollars)

[NOTE: an upcoming change in federal regulations will require RTP applicants to be a government agency

### **Who ought to enforce this type of system?**

Whatever choice is made as to who enforces the permit system, it is imperative that there is a mechanism for purchase at the trail head and enforcement along the trails

Whoever enforces the permit system should receive a portion of the fine value in order to cover the cost of enforcement

In Maine, game wardens enforce the permit system with fines

### **What would be an appropriate penalty for not having the permit and riding on state land?**

Not discussed

### **Other issues**

For counties that are adjacent to other states, how to address out-of-state riders who may be responding to tourism promotions

Consider establishing reciprocity agreements with adjacent states who also have permit systems, especially if there are interconnected trails

Would the permit system also apply to providing access to trails on federal lands

How would a state permit system overlay with an existing county fee system?

[Allow private or county owned trail systems with fee systems to participate in the cost share so long as they permit public access. Could include continuation of a portion of their private fees at a reduced rate for those with state permits]

Need to recognize that the trail issues associated with trails on public vs private lands are very different and that in some parts of KY, primary access is to trails on public lands while in other parts of KY, primary access is to trails on private lands

Comments from the perspective of other states

Linear trails promote more courteous/leisurely trail use while closed loop trails allow for faster and riskier riding

### **Other questions that might come from the audience**

Would a state permit enable me to ride on a county trail that also charge a fee for use?

Who will determine how the money will be used?

Kentucky Recreational Trails Authority will manage the monies