



POLICIES ON HORSEBACK RIDING ON HARVARD TRAILS

These policies have been adopted by the Harvard Conservation Commission on April 17, 2008 and are subject to change. Please see the town website at www.harvard.ma.us and look under town boards (appointed) for the Conservation Commission page to view these policies and possible updates. *A current version of these policies should be posted at all barns that lease/board horses or otherwise provide access to trail riding in Harvard.*

Purpose: To protect the town's trails from erosion, which degrades streams and wetlands as well as the trails themselves, and from excessive widening which occurs when riders leave the trail to avoid mud, rocks, etc., and to protect the vegetation along our trails, and protecting the integrity of the trails

- 1) **All major trails, designated by yellow blazes, may be used for horseback riding, unless otherwise posted.** For maps please see the Harvard Trail Guide, produced by the Harvard Conservation Trust and available at Town Hall for \$10.
- 2) **Secondary trails, designated by blue blazes, should not be used by horses, unless otherwise posted.** These are designed to be narrow, low-impact trails due to the nature of the terrain and/or flora.
- 3) **Trails may not be re-routed, improved or altered without permission of the Conservation Commission.** Please call Liz Allard at 978-456-4106 ext. 3 to report problems or recommend changes.
- 4) **Riders may pass around the periphery of fields, but may not ride off trail through fields or use conservation land for establishing rings or jumps.** Fields on conservation land are protected in the interests of wildlife, including ground-nesting birds, and/or agricultural use.
- 5) **Horses are not permitted on trails when conditions are muddy.** When the ground is thawing in spring, trails are especially vulnerable and can also be hazardous. In mud season, passage of a single horse can severely damage a trail. In spite of everyone's spring fever, refrain from trail riding until the earth has firmed up and monitor conditions after significant rainfall. A few weeks of restraint can protect trails for the rest of the year.
- 6) **Riding is not permitted on town playing fields, the lands at *Harvard Park*, or on trails on private land, including orchards and other agricultural lands without permission of the owner.**

Candy Frazer c/o candy.f@charter.net and Pam Browning c/o pjbrowning2001@yahoo.com maintains communication with riders in town and will disseminate updates if particular sections of trails are in poor condition and need to be avoided, on trail improvements, etc. Candy also has information about indoor and outdoor rings that can be used when trails conditions are icy or muddy. The Conservation Commission relies on the community of riders to keep Harvard's trails in good condition through thoughtful use and communication. **Please join this group to receive the latest information.** Thank you for your help!