

Merrymeeting Wheelers Bicycle Club

Bike Path Riding Etiquette

Bike Path and Multi-use Trail Riding

Recreational 'multi user' bike paths and trails have become quite popular. As a result, multi use trails have become very congested and safety is a major issue. Whether bicycling, skating, walking, or jogging, following the same rules as everyone else will help you have a safer, more enjoyable time.

Trails have engineering and design limitations that require you to ride differently than you would on the road. If your preferred speed or style of cycling is inappropriate for trails, look for better-suited alternative street routes.

Be Alert: All trail users should remain alert to traffic; mirrors help see faster users coming from behind. Head sets eliminate important passing signals.

Be Predictable: Walk and ride straight. Indicate when you are turning. Warn other trail users of your intentions.

Be Courteous: All trail users, including bicyclists, joggers and wheelchair users, should be respectful of other users, regardless of their mode of travel, speed, or skill level.

Do Not Block the Trail: When riding in a group, use no more than half the trail. On many heavy use or narrow trails, this means that all users will need to stay single file. And if you stop to regroup, or bird watch, always do it off the trail.

Keep Right: You should stay as close to the right side of the trail as is safe, except when passing another user. Many pedestrians walk facing traffic. This allows direct eye contact and reduces the surprise of a cyclist passing on their left, and allows them to step to their left and clear the trail. Others follow the keep-right rule and walk with traffic. Walkers should not walk right down the middle. Riders should take it slow when passing pedestrians, they can be unpredictable.

Pass on Left: Pass others, going your direction, on their left. Look ahead and behind to make sure the lane is clear before pulling out. Pass with ample separation. Do not move back to the right until safely passed. Fast moving users are responsible for yielding to slower moving users.

Give an Audible Signal Before Passing: Give a clear signal before when passing. This signal may be a bell, horn or voice. Warn well in advance so that the slower user has time to react and you have time to maneuver if necessary.

"Passing on your left" is the most common signal used to alert other users of your approach. "Good morning" also does the trick. If you're with a group of riders it is courteous to mention that there are more riders right behind you as you pass.

Watch for head sets. Users with headsets on may not hear your warning so pass gently.

Yield When Entering and Crossing Other Trails: When entering or crossing a trail at trail intersections, yield to traffic on the cross trail or road. This is often the most dangerous point on a trail.

Use Lights at Night: If the trail is open and you are using it between dusk and dawn you must be equipped with lights. Bikes need a white front light and a red rear light or reflector. Reflectors and reflective clothing are no help if there is no source of light.

Clean up Litter: Do not leave any debris along the trail. If you drop something, please pick it up and carry it until you find a litter receptacle. Go the extra mile - pack out more trash than you bring in.

Sources: Most of these tips are reproduced from "Bicycle USA", magazine of the League of American Bicyclists. The information has been slightly modified and added to for the education of riders with the Merrymeeting Wheelers Bicycle Club

