

Hiking Trail Etiquette

Pennsylvania's parks and forests contain thousands of miles of trails, some of which are foot-traffic only and others shared use. We all have a role in conserving these pathways to wellness. Proper trail etiquette helps instill respect for other trail users while promoting stewardship of the land.

On a shared use trail, remember the general rule of yielding:

Hikers going uphill have the right-of-way. If you are moving downhill, simply step aside.

Hikers yield to horses and other pack stock—slowly and calmly step to the side. If you are approaching from behind, quietly make your presence and intentions known.

Bicyclists yield to hikers and horses—come to a full stop and step aside, being mindful of where you are stepping to avoid stepping on plants.



General etiquette:

Plan ahead and have an alternative destination in mind. If a trail head or parking area is at capacity, seek another destination.

When in a group, hike single file.

When approaching another hiker/biker/equestrian from behind, make yourself known with a simple 'hello' or 'passing on your left' comment.

Stay on the trail to avoid damage to plants and animal habitat and reduce trail erosion.

Do not disturb wildlife—watch from a distance.

Pack out any trash.

Know how to relieve yourself without having an impact.

Keep pets leashed and clean up after them.

Be mindful of trail conditions—if a trail is too wet or muddy, choose another trail.

Speak in quiet tones and limit the use of electronic devices to not only promote a sense of calm, but to reduce disturbance to wildlife and wildlife communication.

Be aware of your surroundings.

Respect others.

