

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

Pack it in – Pack it out! What a no – brainer but the most abused by all user groups.

Summer riding season is now upon us so the blame for unsightly trash in the forests and wilderness areas shifts from the hunting community directly on to the shoulders of the Equestrians, Backpackers, and Bikers. Wait a minute, what is wrong with this picture? Isn't the hunting community basically or at least to some degree made up of the aforementioned user groups?

Talk to any outdoor enthusiast about trash and the answer is invariably the same. "I take mine out." Makes you wonder who is leaving the stuff doesn't it? Disposing of waste properly is not just about the trash that comes out of our pockets, backpacks, and saddle bags. I wonder how the same people who responded that they "always take theirs out" would respond to human waste

?" "Donde esta el bano"? No matter how you say it, "Where is the bathroom" is an important question. The four objectives of proper human waste disposal are:

- 1. Avoid polluting water sources.**
- 2. Eliminate contact with insects and animals.**
- 3. Maximize decomposition.**
- 4. Minimize the chances of social impacts.**

Whenever facilities or outhouses are available, they should be used. If facilities aren't available, dig and use a "cat hole." Cat holes should be at least six to eight inches deep, (your accuracy will determine hole circumference) and at least two hundred feet from any water source. 200' is approximately seventy average adult steps. Step this off at home you will be surprised how far two hundred feet really is. A third and not so popular option is to carry your waste out, should you decide this is the best option for the area you will be visiting, carry a couple of one gallon

size ziploc bags for the waste and toilet paper and dispose of properly back at your trailer or camp.

The biggest complaint equestrians get from other user groups. Are you ready for this? **Horse Manure.** Take the time to scatter the manure at trailheads and staging areas. Campground areas, maintained by BCH Chapters, seldom, if ever, does the Chapter receive kudos for the challenging work. The Forest Service, however, certainly gets the complaints about the messes left by equestrians at the very same place. If you use the stalls and high lines, take the extra time to rehab the highline and stalls, bag wasted hay and carry it back to the barn for disposal. If other users see you doing these things and making the effort to minimize the impact, there are less complaints and less work on scheduled workdays for the volunteer crews. The perception of equestrian users just gained a few points, and we all know that any time that happens it is a good thing.

It is imperative that we as Back Country Horsemen continue to “raise the bar” so to speak and educate user groups in proper Leave No Trace techniques. It is in all our best interests.

Happy Trails, Robert Wagner