



Equestrian Management Plan Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to announce that the Ninety Six Equestrian Management Plan / Environmental Assessment (EA) is available for public review and comment. The Plan is an important milestone in creating a shared vision for enhancing visitor experience, while protecting Ninety Six National Historic Site's cultural and natural resources.

The Plan is built on a public comment period and open house in the summer of 2017, as well as conversations with area residents, local government officials, and our partners and stakeholders.

Public input is a key element of our planning process, and it is important to hear your thoughts on the Plan. Therefore, I would like to cordially invite you to attend a public meeting to learn more about this plan, ask questions and provide comments. The location, date, and time are shown below.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the development of the Plan. We hope to hear more from you soon!

John Slaughter,
Superintendent



Equestrian Use at Ninety Six National Historic Site

Equestrian use of the site has occurred since before the area became part of the National Park System and it has increased in recent years. This increase in equestrian use, combined with heavy rain events has resulted in an increase in erosion and other adverse resource impacts. Concerns about how to prevent erosion, effects to water quality, and damage to historic landscapes and trails while providing for a variety of recreational, inspirational, and educational uses are high priorities for both park staff, and visitors - including equestrian user groups.

During the first five days of October 2015, the area surrounding the park received 8 to 12 inches of rain that produced flash flooding across the area, particularly in low-lying areas. After the statewide historic rainfall, the park received additional significant precipitation and suffered more flash flooding. Continued rains and damage, including damage to historic resources caused by horseback riding during and directly after the rains, left many of the trails in an unstable condition. Existing trail damage resulted in the development of unauthorized trails and damage to primary historic resources such as the Gouedy Trail, Charleston Road, and the Stockade Fort. After this rain event, the park closed the trails to equestrian use for several months while it evaluated the damage and conducted archeological assessments. National Park Service (NPS) archeologists determined that the equestrian use on trails and fire roads in the northern part of the park was not significantly impacting any archeological sites. The park then reopened these trails to equestrian use and improved parking/access for equestrian users on September 9, 2016. When the trails were reopened, the caveat was that they would close for short periods of time after receiving predetermined amounts of rain.

Public Meeting Information

Date: Monday, December 3, 2018

Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Location: Ninety Six Welcome Center

97 Highway 34

Ninety Six, SC 29666

Equestrian Management Plan

The NPS has completed a plan to determine how best to accommodate equestrian usage of trails, while protecting and preserving the natural and cultural resources for which Congress established the site.

The proposed action considers the number, location, design, and maintenance of the park's current equestrian trails. Special use permits are under consideration as one way to improve both the pedestrian and equestrian visitors' experience. This plan is designed to address these issues and to achieve and maintain consistency with NPS management plans and policies.



Alternatives

The park considered a full range of alternatives during this planning process. The park incorporated alternatives that are reasonable, economically and technically feasible, fulfill the purpose and need of the plan, and minimize impacts to the park's fundamental resources and values.

Alternative Concepts

- A. Continue to allow equestrian use on certain trails. Facilities remain as they are.
- B. Allow equestrian use on certain trails, implement a special use permit under established circumstances, install bulletin board, trash cans, and a permanent gate at the existing equestrian lot. **The NPS Preferred Alternative.**
- C. Close all trails to equestrian use.



How You Can Participate:

- Attend the public meeting on 12/3/2018
- Post your comments on the NPS Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC) website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/nisiequestrianplan> from November 19 - December 19, 2018.

Mail Your Comments To:

Ben Richardson
Chief of Planning and Partnerships
Southern Campaign of the American
Revolution Parks 338 New Pleasant Road
Gaffney, SC 29341

ALL COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 19, 2018

