

# RIDING IN BEAR COUNTRY

When riding on trails you are at risk of surprising a bear, cougar, moose, or even a rattlesnake



## Safety Tips from the Be Bear Aware Campaign



Carry Bear Spray readily accessible on your waist, hip, or shoulder. Do not secure your bear spray to the horse.

When Buying Bear Spray look for 7+ seconds of spray duration and distance of 30+ feet.

To Prepare Your Horse for a Bear or Cougar Encounter, hang pelts on their coral fence.

Ride after sunrise and before sunset. Ride with a partner or group.

Look, Listen & Smell for bear signs such as tracks, scat, claw marks on trees, rocks/logs rolled over, and foul, pungent odors from carrion or a bear that has rolled in it. Watch for circling birds as they are a sign of a fresh animal kill.

Call Out & Slow Down when travelling near or through thick brush, around blind corners, when riding near noisy streams & rivers, and when it is windy, or you are in area with low visibility. Be extra alert for cougars when near ledges, outcroppings, and on cliff sides.

Balance Speed with Caution. The faster you ride, the more risk there is of a surprise encounter with a bear or other wildlife.

Riding with Dogs in the bear country poses additional risks to you and your horse. An aggressive animal may chase them back to you.

Be In Tune with Your Horse. Take note of your horse's cues such as ear and muscle movement, head and body position, hesitation, quickening of its pace, nervousness, refusal to go forward, snorting, or pawing. Use their instincts and quickly assess your surroundings.

If You Encounter a Bear, do not panic as your horse might too. Stay mounted and quickly ready your bear spray. Assess the bear and your options.



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How to Avoid Encounters

Proper Food Storage

Bear Identification

What to do in an Encounter

How to Deploy Bear Spray

# BE BEAR AWARE CAMPAIGN

## Bear Spray

The Be Bear Aware Campaign promotes the carrying and proper use of a quality bear spray when hiking, biking, fishing, camping, and hunting in bear country. We recommend you purchase bear spray that has a spray duration of at least 7+ seconds and has a spray distance of at least 30+ feet. Meeting or exceeding this standard gives you extra protection for more than one charge, multiple bears, wind, rain, cold, erratic spraying, or accidentally spraying over top of the bear.

Keep bear spray on your person and not attached to your horse in case you become separated.

Listen to your horse's cues and stop and assess surroundings when visibility or ability to hear is obstructed.

Remember, bear spray can seriously affect horses and their ability to breathe until the effects wear off.



### What If You Encounter a Bear?



If you see, or suspect, a bear is in the area, stop and get your bear spray ready for quick use.

If the bear is in the distance and **does not** notice you, take a route that detours around the bear and remain cautious.

If the bear is in the distance and **does** notice you, stop, talk in a non-threatening, monotone voice and assess the situation. Can you ride away and take a detour? Is the bear approaching you? Does it appear agitated, aggressive, or ready to charge?



### What If You are Charged by a Bear?

When the charging bear is about **60 feet away**, spray slightly downward to a point about 30 feet in front of you. The bear spray will come out with a whooshing sound and reddish-orange coloring, this sometimes is enough to deter the bear from its charge.

When the bear charges from **30 feet**, spontaneously spray downward toward the front of the bear. The bear spray will make a cone-shaped cloud that expands outward and upward. DO NOT AIM, just spray and keep spraying until the bear diverts its charge.

If the charge is from **15 feet**, spray from your horse if you are prepared. If you are on the ground and contact is inevitable, drop and lie flat on your stomach and clasp hands behind your neck. If you can, spray the area both you and the bear are in. It is never too late to use bear spray.