



MHTA State Forest Pathways Survey 2026



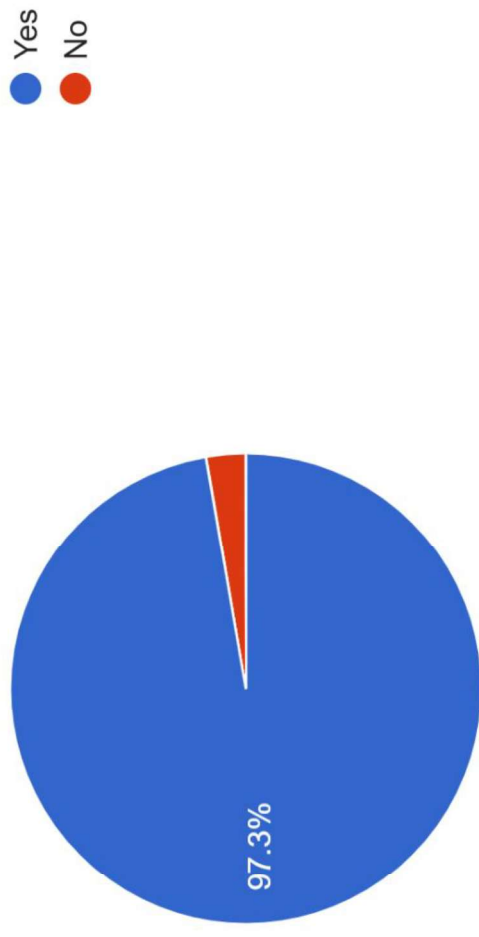
Equestrian Use of State Forest
Pathways



N = 114 responses

Have you horseback ridden any state forest pathways in the past 5 years? See the List Below in the next question for State Forest Pathway Names if you are unsure if you have ridden any pathways.

110 responses



Which State Forest Pathways have you horseback ridden in past 5 years - pg 1/3

N=111

Algonquin	Buttles Road	Headquarters Lake - 35 (31.5%)
Anderson Lake	Canada Lakes - 6 (5.4%)	Indian Lake - 2 (1.8%)
Besser Bell - 2 (1.8%)	Cedar River - 3 (2.7%)	Inspiration Point - 3 (2.7%)
Betsie River - 4 (3.6%)	Chippewa Hills - 8 (7.2%)	Jordan Valley - 3 (2.7%)
Betsie Valley	Days River - 1 (0.9%)	Lake Ann - 3 (2.7%)
Big Knob and Crow Lake - 1 (0.9%)	Fox River	Lake Mary Plain
Big Oaks Equestrian Trails - 48 (43.2%)	Gemini Lake - 1 (0.9%)	Lost Lake - 4 (3.6%)
Black Mountain - 26 (23.4%)	Gene's Pond	Lost Tamarack - 1 (0.9%)
Blind Sucker - 2 (1.8%)	Green Pine Lake	Lost Twin Lakes - 5 (4.5%)
Bodi Lake		

Which State Forest Pathways have you horseback ridden in past 5 years - pg 2/3

N=111

Marsh Lake	Ossineke - 1 (0.9%)	Red Pine Natural Area
Mason Tract - 4 (3.6%)	Paradise	Sand Lake Quiet Area - 7 (6.3%)
Merriman East - 1 (0.9%)	Pickarel Lake - 1 (0.9%)	Sheep Ranch
Muncie Lake - 6 (5.4%)	Pine Baron - 1 (0.9%)	Shore to Shore - 87 (78.4%)
Musketawa - 9 (8.1%)	Pine Bowl - 5 (4.5%)	Silver Creek - 26 (23.4%)*
Ninga Aki	Pine Forest - 3 (2.7%)	Sinkhole - 4 (3.6%)
Norway Ridge - 4 (3.6%)	Pine Haven - 2 (1.8%)	Spring Brook
Ocqueoc Falls - 5 (4.5%)	Pine Valley - 1 (0.9%)	Steeb
Ogemaw Hills - 5 (4.5%)	Pretty Lake - 6 (5.4%)	Stoney Creek Equestrian - 21 (18.9%)

* most likely inaccurate and confused with Allegan County Silver Creek Park

Which State Forest Pathways have you horseback ridden in past 5 years - pg 3/3

N=111

Switchback Ridge - 1 (0.9%)

Takeaways:

Thunder Valley Equestrian - 12 (10.8%)

Tisdale Triangle

Towerman's Watch

Trout Lake - 2 (1.8%)

Tyoga

Vasa - 2 (1.8%)

Warner Creek - 2 (1.8%)

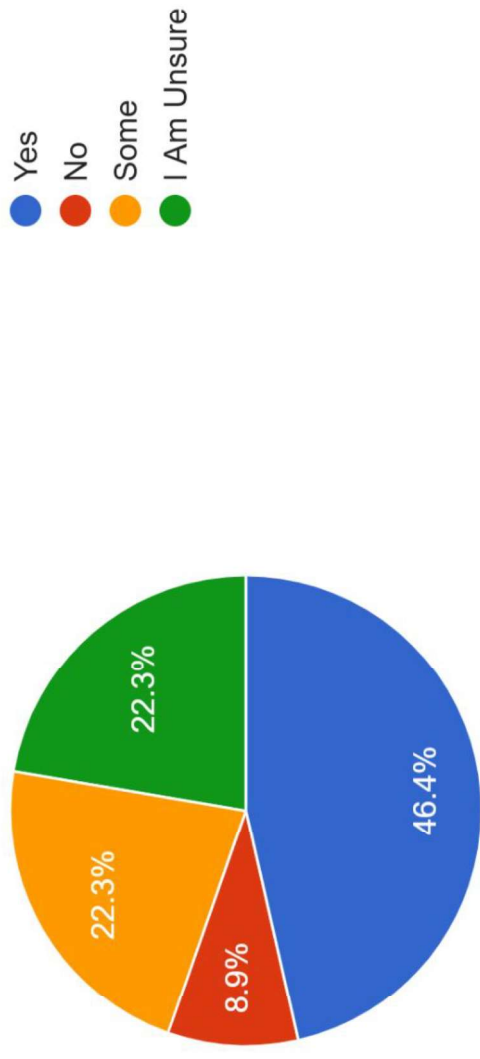
Wildwood Hills- 3 (2.7%)

N/A - 3 (2.7%)

- 65 Pathways Included in Survey
- 46 Pathways Utilized (70%)
- 19 Pathways Not Utilized (30%)
- Trails advertised for Equestrians and with appropriate access (equestrian camping and/or staging areas) are utilized the most

Consider the pathways you selected in the previous question. Do you feel the structures on those pathways (e.g., bridges, boardwalks, trailheads, wet ...c.) are built to specification for horseback riders?"

112 responses



Which Pathways do you feel may have structures that are NOT built to specification for equestrians - pg 1/3

N=54

Algonquin	Buttles Road	Headquarters Lake - 1 (1.9%)
Anderson Lake	Canada Lakes - 1 (1.9%)	Indian Lake
Besser Bell - 1 (1.9%)	Cedar River	Inspiration Point - 1 (1.9%)
Betsie River - 1 (1.9%)	Chippewa Hills	Jordan Valley - 2 (3.7%)
Betsie Valley	Days River	Lake Ann - 1 (1.9%)
Big Knob and Crow Lake - 1 (1.9%)	Fox River	Lake Mary Plain
Big Oaks Equestrian Trails	Gemini Lake	Lost Lake - 1 (1.9%)
Black Mountain	Gene's Pond	Lost Tamarack
Blind Sucker - 1 (1.9%)	Green Pine Lake	Lost Twin Lakes - 1 (1.9%)
Bodi Lake		

Which Pathways do you feel may have structures that are NOT built to specification for equestrians - pg 2/3

N=54

Marsh Lake	Ossineke - 1 (1.9%)	Red Pine Natural Area
Mason Tract - 2 (3.7%)	Paradise	Sand Lake Quiet Area -2 (3.7%)
Merriman East	Pickarel Lake - 1 (1.9%)	Sheep Ranch
Muncie Lake - 1 (1.9%)	Pine Baron	Shore to Shore - 14 (25.9%)
Musketawa	Pine Bowl	Silver Creek - 1 (1.9%)*
Ninga Aki	Pine Forest	Sinkhole - 1 (1.9%)
Norway Ridge - 3 (5.6%)	Pine Haven	Spring Brook
Ocqueoc Falls - 2 (3.7%)	Pine Valley	Steeb
Ogemaw Hills	Pretty Lake - 1 (1.9%)	Stoney Creek Equestrian - 1 (1.9%)

* may be inaccurate and confused with Allegan County Silver Creek Park

Which Pathways do you feel may have structures that are NOT built to specification for equestrians - pg 3/3

N=54

Switchback Ridge

Thunder Valley Equestrian - 2 (3.7%)

Tisdale Triangle

Towerman's Watch

Trout Lake

Tyoga

Vasa - 2 (3.7%)

Warner Creek - 1 (1.9%)

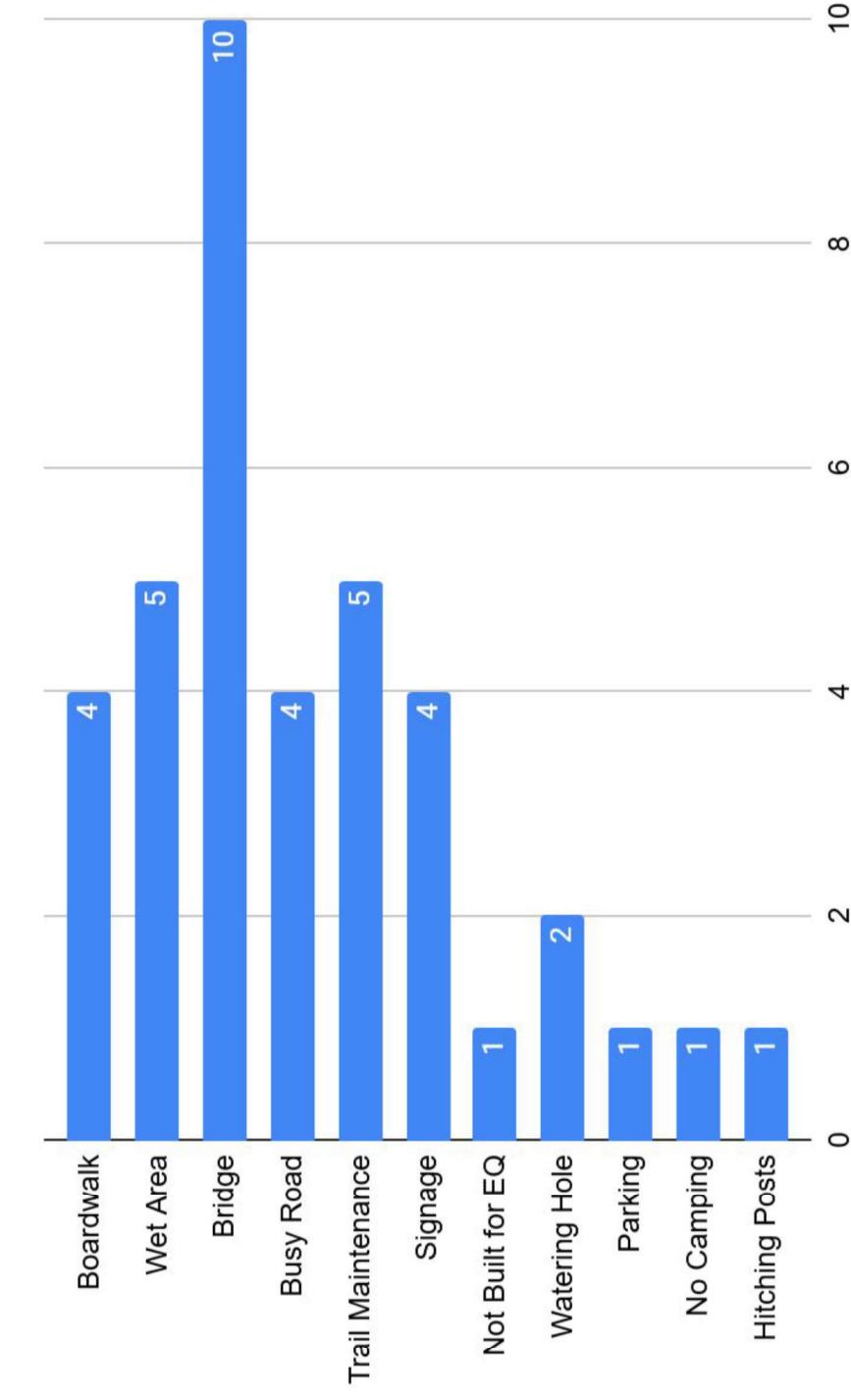
Wildwood Hills

N/A - 23 (42.6%)

Takeaways:

- 65 Pathways Included (for survey)
- 46 Pathways Utilized (question 2)
- 26 Identified as having structures not built for equestrians
- 40% of Total Pathways identified as possibly having structures NOT built for Equestrians
- 56% of Pathways Utilized by equestrians identified as possibly having structures NOT built for Equestrians

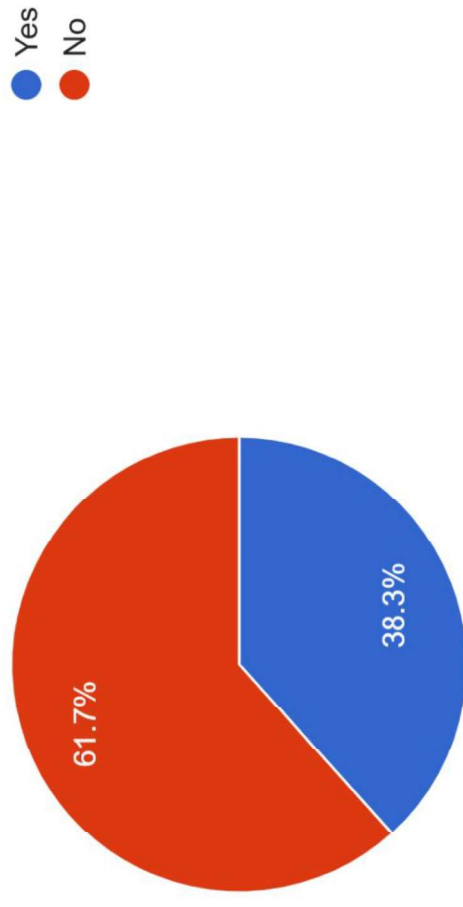
Which Structures in the above questions do you feel may NOT be built to specification for horseback riders?



N=31

Are there any pathways that allow horses, but you choose not to ride due to potential conflicts with other trail users?

94 responses



Which Pathways do you avoid due to potential conflict with other trail users - pg 1/3

N=57

Algonquin	Buttles Road	Headquarters Lake - 1 (1.8%)
Anderson Lake	Canada Lakes	Indian Lake
Besser Bell	Cedar River	Inspiration Point - 3 (5.3%)
Betsie River - 2 (3.5%)	Chippewa Hills - 1 (1.8%)	Jordan Valley - 3 (5.3%)
Betsie Valley - 2(3.5%)	Days River	Lake Ann - 1 (1.8%)
Big Knob and Crow Lake	Fox River	Lake Mary Plain
Big Oaks Equestrian Trails - 8 (14%)	Gemini Lake - 1 (1.8%)	Lost Lake - 1 (1.8%)
Black Mountain	Gene's Pond	Lost Tamarack
Blind Sucker - 1 (1.8%)	Green Pine Lake	Lost Twin Lakes -2 (3.5%)
Bodi Lake		

Which Pathways do you avoid due to potential conflict with other trail users - pg 2/3

N=57

Marsh Lake	Ossineke	Red Pine Natural Area
Mason Tract - 2 (3.5%)	Paradise	Sand Lake Quiet Area - 3 (5.3%)
Merriman East	Pickarel Lake - 2 (3.5%)	Sheep Ranch
Muncie Lake - 1 (1.8%)	Pine Baron - 1 (1.8%)	Shore to Shore - 6 (10.5%)
Musketawa - 2 (3.5%)	Pine Bowl	Silver Creek - 1 (1.8%)*
Ninga Aki	Pine Forest	Sinkhole - 1 (1.8%)
Norway Ridge - 3 (5.3%)	Pine Haven - 1 (1.8%)	Spring Brook
Ocqueoc Falls - 3 (5.3%)	Pine Valley	Steeb
Ogemaw Hills - 1 (1.8%)	Pretty Lake - 1 (1.8%)	Stoney Creek Equestrian

* may be inaccurate and confused with Allegan County Silver Creek Park

Which Pathways do you avoid due to potential conflict with other trail users - pg 3/3

N=57

Switchback Ridge

Thunder Valley Equestrian

Tisdale Triangle

Towerman's Watch

Trout Lake

Tyoga

Vasa - 5 (8.8%)

Warner Creek

Wildwood Hills - 1 (1.8%)

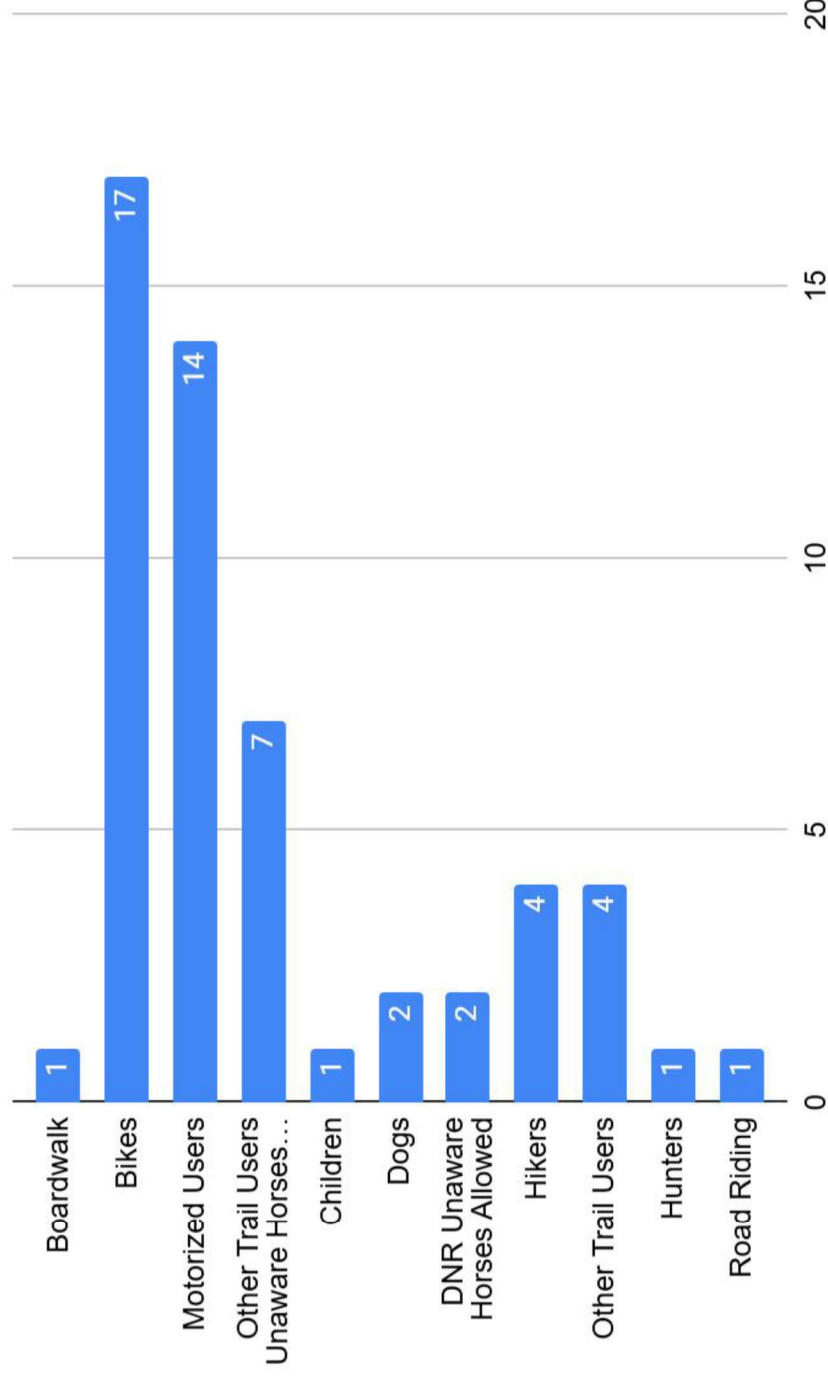
N/A - 24 (42.1%)

Takeaways:

- 65 Pathways Included in Survey
- 46 Pathways Utilized (question 2)
- 28 Identified as avoided due to potential conflict with other trail users
- 43% of Total Pathways identified as avoided due to potential conflict with other trail users
- 59% of Utilized Pathways identified as avoided due to potential conflict with other trail users

Please describe potential conflict issues on above Pathway

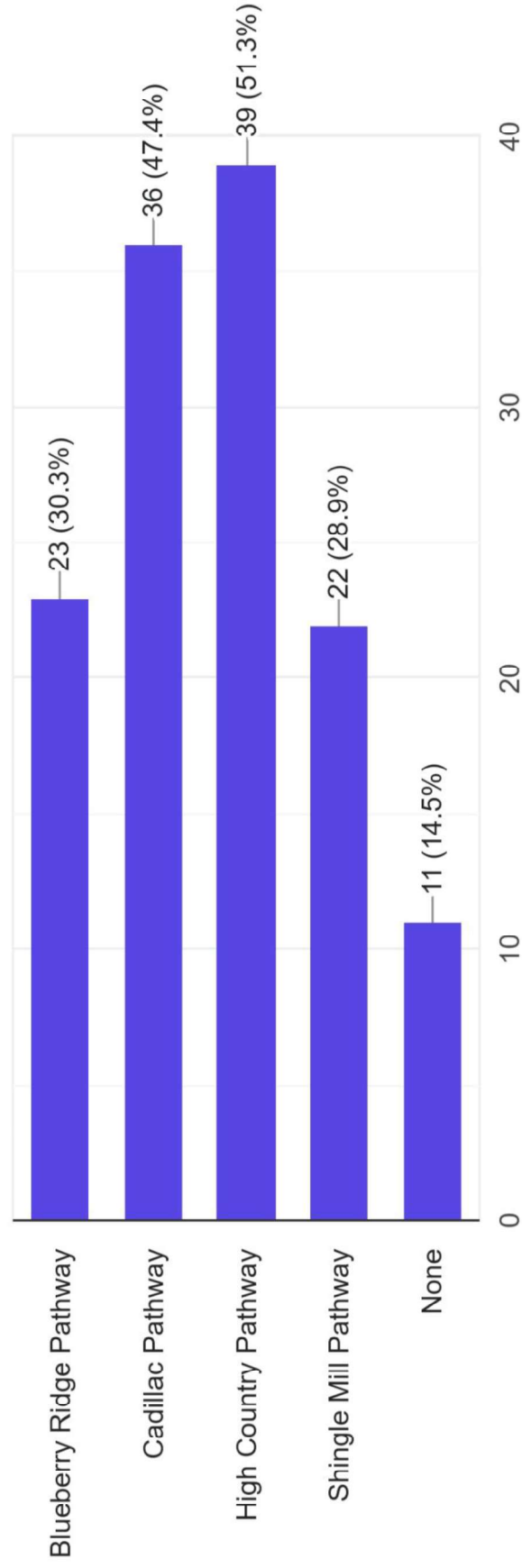
N=39



“Other users unaware horses are allowed on the Pathway” is the third most common potential conflict

There are Land Use Orders restricting horses from the following pathways. Would you like to have access to horseback ride at any of these pathways?

76 responses



Summary of Additional Thoughts and Feedback from Survey Participants - pg 1

N=50

- Need for Trail Etiquette, Horses Allowed, and Trail Crossing Signage
- Need for better trail etiquette education
- Update online information to show equestrians are allowed
- Limited riding in PRC, additional access to the area Pathways EQ are not allowed on would be beneficial
- Concerns for motorized and e-bike use on trails
- High Country Pathway is very low use and equestrians would benefit from access

Summary of Additional Thoughts and Feedback from Survey Participants - pg 2

N=50

- Need for more designated horse trails in U.P.
- Some do not ride multi-use trails due to conflict potential
- Be mindful that lack of parking for equestrians creates access issues
- Consider impacts on popular cross country ski trails
- Erosion issues on trails can be mitigated with properly built, sustainable trails
- Appreciation for the work DNR and trail associations are doing in MI

Of note:

- The State Forest Pathway list for this study was produced by the DNR
- Not every pathway of the 65 total is accessible to equestrians:
 - The only access may be inside a Park or Rec Area not designated for equestrians
 - Structures may make the trail incompatible to equestrian use
 - Available parking may not be sufficient for a horse trailer
 - This could be studied further to get a better understanding of how many are actually accessible to equestrians to get more accurate percentages of use