

Horse Apples on the Trail

It is true that the typical recreation user of our parks, national forests, wilderness, et al comes from an urban background and seeing horse apples (manure) on the trail is disgusting to them. These same hikers are enthralled with the sightings of deer, elk, mountain lion, or bear and probably come upon their Ascat@ and don't find it offensive in any way.

Horses are strictly vegetarians and their apples are recycled grass and do not spread disease. Some vegetarian animals such as deer and elk are known to spread Giardia, which does cause disease in humans. Mountain lion, coyote and bear are carnivores and their scat can spread disease. All living animals leave manure.

Horse apples are organic particles B just an early stage of soil, returning to earth. Once deposited on the trail, horse apples break down quickly. Dogs are carnivorous and their droppings do not readily break down. Because dogs are domestic pets, it is unlikely that their droppings carry disease; however, the sheer number of dogs and the fact that their droppings do not easily decay has caused the requirement of Apick up after your dog.@

The trails are intended for all users, unless there is a safety factor or preservation of an area. Asking equestrians to pick up after their horses on the trail is impractical. Horse apples on the trail are not a safety issue and do not harm the area. Asking equestrians to pick up after their horses at the trail head parking lot is reasonable. I ask my fellow equestrian trail riders to do that!
Horse apples on the trail are just soil in one of its early stages and you walk on it all of the time.

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