​This letter from RFVHC Member Suzy Karlinski is worth reading:

**Memo to: Andy Worline**
**From: Suzy Karlinski**
**Date: 10-23-15**
**RE: Snowmass Village Equestrian Trails**

I am writing this on behalf of the equestrian members of the POSTR Steering Committee, as a member of the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council and as a 16- year equestrian resident of Snowmass Village.
Goals for the equestrian community are:

1. **To have safe ‘shared’ trails throughout the Village.** What are ‘safe’ shared trails? Bikes and horses can safely share trails when trail design allows a horse sufficient visual advance of oncoming bikes (in other words, straight-aways are generally safe whereas repeated hairpin turns are not). Another aspect of safety is that horses have a flat place to move off the trail in order to allow for passing bikes. In areas of the trail where there exists steepness on both sides of the trail, that is considered unsafe for horses.

2. To **specifically identify unsafe equestrian trails.** For example, parts of Sky Mountain (which is a shared trail) are safe for shared traffic and certain parts are not. We must identify the unsafe parts of Sky Mountain (and all other shared trails).

3. **To create separate, dedicated equestrian trails** where current shared trails are determined unsafe for horses.

4. **To have connectivity of all trails.**

5. **To create, where necessary, new trails that meet our connectivity goals.** We would like to see an entire loop from rodeo grounds, over Sky Mountain to Tom Blake, to the Mall, to the Rim Trail, back to rodeo grounds.

6. **To open Cozy Line Trail, Tom Blake, Ditch Trail, Sleigh Ride Trail, Government Trail officially to horses** and/or create parallel alternates where it is deemed unsafe for horses to share those trails with bikers.

7. **To ensure adequate parking and turn-around for horse trailers at trail access points throughout the Village.**

**In review:**

* There is no connectivity from Owl Creek to the rodeo grounds.
* Sky Mountain trail is shared with bikers and is unsafe in some places.
* Trailer parking at the cemetery is an option that needs to be explored but we need equestrian trails that can take us from cemetery parking to Tom Blake and to the rodeo grounds. Perhaps Highline or Lowline need to be a dedicated equestrian only trail.
* The current Tom Blake equestrian trail only goes so far. We need a trail that will take us to the Mall, connect with Government and down to the Ditch Trail.
* The entire Rim Trail should somehow be made open to horses. Again, new adjunct trails may need to be constructed.
* Parking at the rodeo grounds is excellent but the lot is frequently closed.
* Parking at Tom Blake is very congested in the summer and rarely allows for trailer parking.
* Parking at Two Creeks is very good but trail access & connectivity are bad.
* Parking at the Divide is congested in the summer and not always conducive to trailer parking, but is a great place for horses to access trails.
* Parking at Cozy Point is good but we would like to be able to access Sky Mountain trail via Cozy Line.

We are asking that the above points be seriously considered during the information gathering process with the goal being, **implementation,** in the final plan.

Snowmass Village has a long history of equestrian activity. Horses are a distinct part of our Village heritage. Horses were using trails and in fact, **creating** most of the existing trails, long before bikes, or for that matter, skiing, came to Snowmass Village. We understand the popularity of mountain biking and the financial impact it has on the community. However, which group has a perceived greater value or sense of importance must not be drawn. As well, which group is greater in numbers should not enter into the planning of trails. We believe that bikers and horses can and should co-exist. It’s just that with the emergence of mountain biking on our trails, the dynamics of trail use has changed. Not so many years ago, equestrians rode Snowmass Village trails and rarely saw a biker. Now that trail use and design is being discussed, it is critical that the equestrian piece be included.