



# Signs and Etiquette for Shared-use Urban Trails

*Encouraging different types of users to share the trail is just as important on urban trails as it is on backcountry trails.*

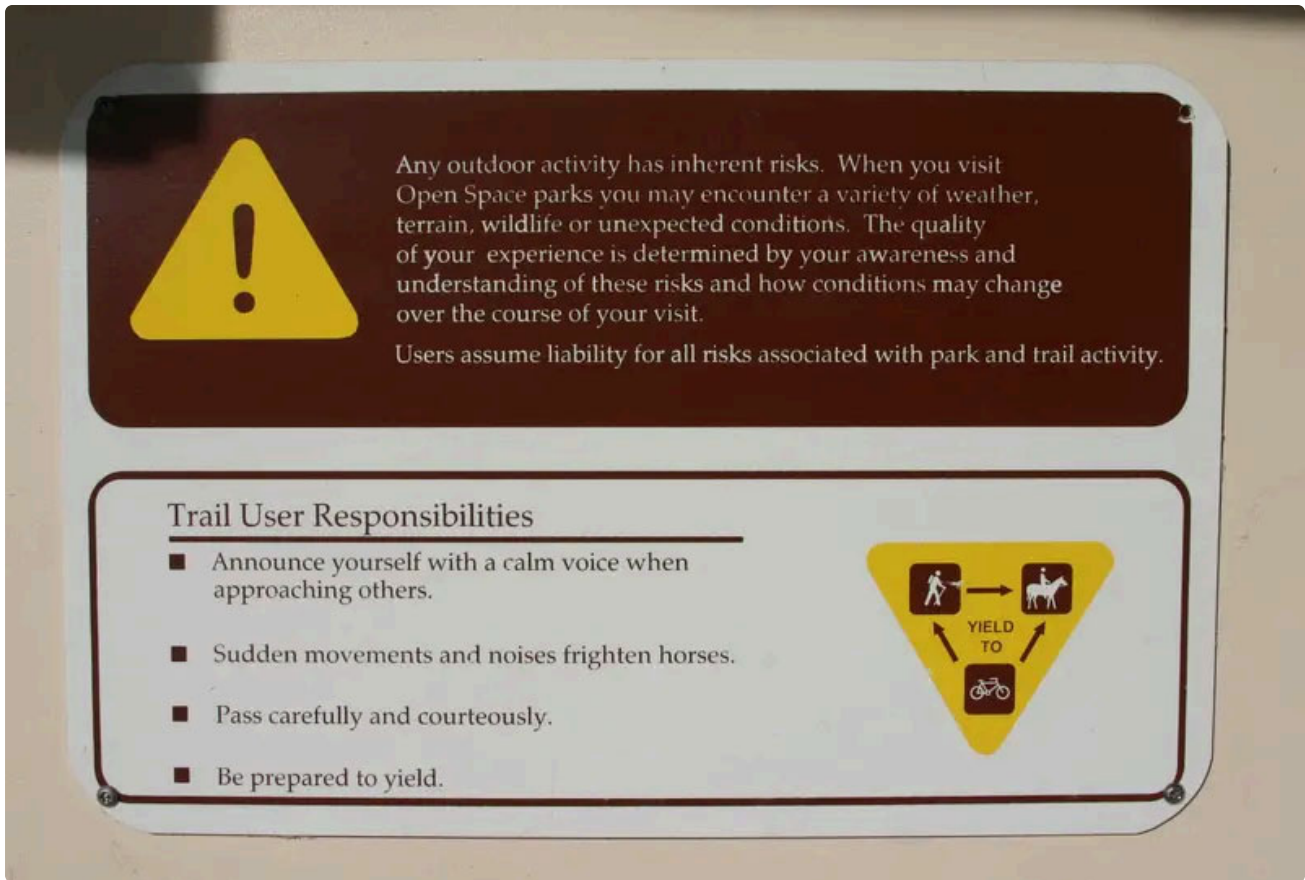
**by Stuart Macdonald (<https://www.americantrails.org/presenters-and-authors/stuart-macdonald>), Trail Consultant, American Trails**

In many urban trail corridors the sheer amount of use creates some difficulties for sharing the trail. Wider trails are one solution. But how wide do you want to make the trail? And does a single surface material satisfy all trail users? In many cases, the better solution is to provide two or even three pathways or trail treads with different surfaces. Other treatments seek to make the separation of treads more clear. The two treads may be adjacent or some distance away. The secondary tread may even be an informal path made by mountain bicyclists or horse riders. Signs or pavement markings may also be provided to clarify the separation.



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/3-10-Chattanooga-17-Nov-IMG\\_0480.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/3-10-Chattanooga-17-Nov-IMG_0480.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062439&s=8aa3cfbae3b127ae24b437c63fdb61cc)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062439&s=8aa3cfbae3b127ae24b437c63fdb61cc](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/3-10-Chattanooga-17-Nov-IMG_0480.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062439&s=8aa3cfbae3b127ae24b437c63fdb61cc))  
Rules for trail users posted along Tennessee Riverwalk trail, Chattanooga, Tennessee



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/4-10-Crown-Hill-Park-trails-Wheat-Ridge-CO-20DecIMG\\_0539.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/4-10-Crown-Hill-Park-trails-Wheat-Ridge-CO-20DecIMG_0539.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062327&s=942c13772e7c95f23c681439593f8702)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062327&s=942c13772e7c95f23c681439593f8702](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/4-10-Crown-Hill-Park-trails-Wheat-Ridge-CO-20DecIMG_0539.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062327&s=942c13772e7c95f23c681439593f8702))

Users cautioned and encouraged to be courteous on Crown Hill Park trails, Wheat Ridge, Colorado



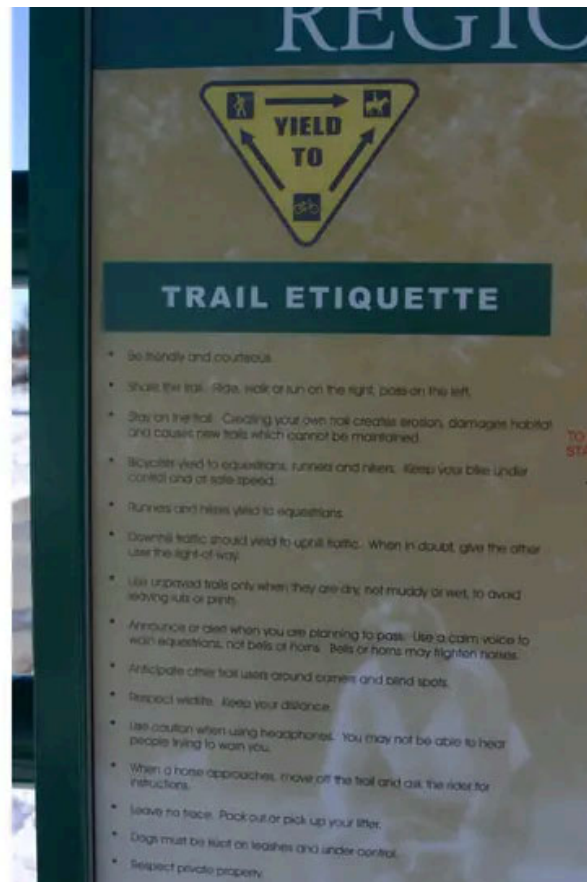
([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/2-SanDiegoMissionBay7-Sept09-P9070685.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/2-SanDiegoMissionBay7-Sept09-P9070685.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062373&s=c8e6efa671166079401204a7d9fb0e77)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062373&s=c8e6efa671166079401204a7d9fb0e77\)](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/2-SanDiegoMissionBay7-Sept09-P9070685.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062373&s=c8e6efa671166079401204a7d9fb0e77)

Rules for bikers and walkers to follow on San Diego Mission Bay trail



(<https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/20-P1190381-copy.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062374&s=4beae5e6e1398dda848cb46e1a4f9ff0>)  
All trail users are advised to go slow and keep right approaching circular ramp on trail bridge crossing Town Lake, Austin, TX



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/Sign\\_Share\\_Parker-Cherry-Creek-wide.jpg?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/Sign_Share_Parker-Cherry-Creek-wide.jpg?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062126&s=bcc3f91d67d68c92e30b47f93f0c1fb4)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062126&s=bcc3f91d67d68c92e30b47f93f0c1fb4](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/Sign_Share_Parker-Cherry-Creek-wide.jpg?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062126&s=bcc3f91d67d68c92e30b47f93f0c1fb4))  
Sign asks bicycles to yield to skaters and runners, Liberty Park Trail, Salt Lake City, Utah



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/19-West-River-Parkway-Minneapolis-29Oct2010-P1010014.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/19-West-River-Parkway-Minneapolis-29Oct2010-P1010014.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062378&s=4da89534bd56f0f9ed644274c25064a2)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062378&s=4da89534bd56f0f9ed644274c25064a2](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/19-West-River-Parkway-Minneapolis-29Oct2010-P1010014.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062378&s=4da89534bd56f0f9ed644274c25064a2))  
Pavement stripes and symbols keep cyclists and pedestrians in their own lanes; Martin Olav Sabo bridge on Midtown Greenway, Minneapolis



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/17-Cherry-Creek-Trail-Denver-19-Dec-2009-PC191969.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/17-Cherry-Creek-Trail-Denver-19-Dec-2009-PC191969.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062405&s=8df806bc2e3a97ca9cfe6f1fe4730885)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062405&s=8df806bc2e3a97ca9cfe6f1fe4730885](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/17-Cherry-Creek-Trail-Denver-19-Dec-2009-PC191969.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062405&s=8df806bc2e3a97ca9cfe6f1fe4730885))  
Stencils on trail pavement reinforce yield message on Cherry Creek Trail, Denver, CO



# SHARE THE TRAIL



## RESPECT:

**OTHER VISITORS - Slow Down & Communicate When Passing.**

**THE LAND AND WILDLIFE - Leave NO Trace.**

**TRAIL RULES - Be Responsible.**



(<https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/imba-share-the-trailb.gif?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062269&s=9365705f102a2ad548a4d212604e5acd>)



(<https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/18-Minneapolis-Martin-Olav-Sabo->

bridge-Midtown-Greenway-28-Oct-2010-P1010037.JPG?

w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062393&s=6c5ac05d4e69f262ab2db15ade5db5b7)

Pavement stripes and symbols keep cyclists and pedestrians in their own lanes; Martin Olav Sabo Bridge on Midtown Greenway, Minneapolis



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/16-IMG\\_1364-Chattanooga-24March09b.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/16-IMG_1364-Chattanooga-24March09b.JPG?)

w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062405&s=45649d04addf5971f691e89f44cf9f8a)

Bikers and skaters yield to walkers: post on Tennessee Riverwalk trail, Chattanooga, TN



(<https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/15-P1160799.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062402&s=f29de8512dd681af3e39b7969a251a99>)  
Sign at curving trail underpass warning cyclists along Cherry Creek Trail, Denver, CO



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/14-09-Snow-Trails-Denver-Boulder-10-11Dec-Clear-Creekk-24Dec.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/14-09-Snow-Trails-Denver-Boulder-10-11Dec-Clear-Creekk-24Dec.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062402&s=d9984d8f033e97ca579f970f18f39c8a)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062402&s=d9984d8f033e97ca579f970f18f39c8a](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/14-09-Snow-Trails-Denver-Boulder-10-11Dec-Clear-Creekk-24Dec.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062402&s=d9984d8f033e97ca579f970f18f39c8a))  
Sign asking trail users to keep right, Cherry Creek Trail, Denver, CO



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/12-IMG\\_7304-copy.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062409&s=15ebe0fd6c78cdb92b28f835ec1a3f9c](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/12-IMG_7304-copy.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062409&s=15ebe0fd6c78cdb92b28f835ec1a3f9c))  
Urban greenway in Corvallis, OR, with similar yield sign with no horses



(<https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/SharetheTrail-TreadLightly.jpg?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062101&s=3b3bc39325c5be12d73c23d4957388aa>)  
Rules for trail users posted along Tennessee Riverwalk trail, Chattanooga, Tennessee



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/8-IMG\\_2403-Clear-Creek-WheatRidge-CO.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/8-IMG_2403-Clear-Creek-WheatRidge-CO.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062314&s=994cd9869f27644c7cb345e704ead3c8)

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Bicyclists yield to walkers, and everyone yields to horses; Clear Creek National Recreation Trail, Wheat Ridge, Colorado



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/6-P1200178.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/6-P1200178.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062333&s=bc712613934ece5769e0e0f70f5f4734)

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ATVs share the Tri-County Recreation Corridor; motorized users are asked to yield to horses, hikers, and bikers; Superior, Wisconsin





([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/5-HighlineCanal-CherryHillsVill-18Oct2009PA181181\\_200114\\_234329.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/5-HighlineCanal-CherryHillsVill-18Oct2009PA181181_200114_234329.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062340&s=1e9616060eb5a7e6a72d277bc66abc06)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062340&s=1e9616060eb5a7e6a72d277bc66abc06](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/5-HighlineCanal-CherryHillsVill-18Oct2009PA181181_200114_234329.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062340&s=1e9616060eb5a7e6a72d277bc66abc06))

Horseback riders share a tunnel under a roadway with bikers and walkers; Highline Canal Trail, Greenwood Village, Colorado



([https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/11-IMG\\_0384-Crescent-Trail-Bethesda-MD.JPG?](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/11-IMG_0384-Crescent-Trail-Bethesda-MD.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062406&s=8335c05eb1574e04933a16c5d73de7b8)

[w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062406&s=8335c05eb1574e04933a16c5d73de7b8](https://optimise2.assets-servd.host/material-civet/production/images/11-IMG_0384-Crescent-Trail-Bethesda-MD.JPG?w=800&h=540&auto=compress%2Cformat&fit=crop&dm=1620062406&s=8335c05eb1574e04933a16c5d73de7b8))  
No horses, so the yield sign simply says bikes yield to pedestrians; Crescent Trail, Bethesda, Maryland

## About the Author



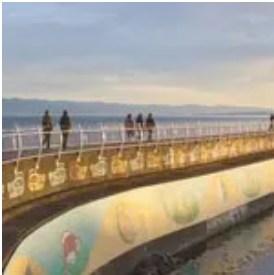
**Stuart Macdonald** spent 19 years as Colorado's State Trails Coordinator. He is the editor of *American Trails Magazine*. During 1998-99, he represented State Trail Administrators on the national committee that proposed regulations for accessible trails. He chaired the National Recreational Trails Committee, which advised the Federal Highway Administration in the first years of the Recreational Trails Program. Stuart grew up in San Diego and his main outdoor interest besides trails is surfing. He has a BA in English from San Francisco State and a Masters in Landscape Architecture from Utah State.

More articles by this author

- Spiritual Journeys: the Light on the Trail Ahead (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/spiritual-journeys-the-light-on-the-trail-ahead>)
- OPDMD: Coming to a Trail Near You? (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/opdmd-coming-to-a-trail-near-you>)
- Trails are Linking Our World (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/trails-are-linking-our-world>)
- The Longest Trail Starts Here (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/the-longest-trail-starts-here>)
- Trails in a Transportation World (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/trails-in-a-transportation-world>)
- Training and Resources for Building Better Trails (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/training-and-resources-for-building-better-trails>)



## Webinars on YouTube that you might like

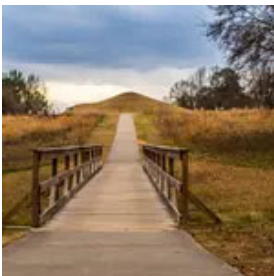


(<https://youtube.com/live/9c3BqQ1bCDE>)

### **Indigenous Placemaking Along Trails (<https://youtube.com/live/9c3BqQ1bCDE>)**

Jul 25, 2024

Learn how indigenous operators have used trails to showcase traditional cultural experiences, ancient canoe routes, traditional culinary experiences, indigenous storytelling, along with many more.



([https://youtu.be/yBOEg\\_yeTOM?si=xGRmVNrNZkJL9oQB](https://youtu.be/yBOEg_yeTOM?si=xGRmVNrNZkJL9oQB))

### **Encouraging Indigenous Participation in Trail Management and Interpretation**

([https://youtu.be/yBOEg\\_yeTOM?si=xGRmVNrNZkJL9oQB](https://youtu.be/yBOEg_yeTOM?si=xGRmVNrNZkJL9oQB))

Dec 14, 2023

Learn how one trail organization has been engaging indigenous communities in the interpretation of trails and public lands to help all visitors connect on a deeper level.

## More resources in this category



([https://www.americantrails.org/resources/izone-imaging-brings-bugtopia-to-](https://www.americantrails.org/resources/izone-imaging-brings-bugtopia-to-life-through-signage)

[life-through-signage](https://www.americantrails.org/resources/izone-imaging-brings-bugtopia-to-life-through-signage))

### **iZone Imaging Brings Bugtopia to Life Through Signage**

(<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/izone-imaging-brings-bugtopia-to-life-through-signage>)

posted Jan 14, 2022

iZone Imaging's High Pressure Laminate brings to life the interpretive signage throughout the Brawn Family Foundation Bugtopia Playground at the Calgary Zoo. The signs are eco-friendly and can withstand the high traffic interactive area over time. (Sponsored Content)



([https://www.americantrails.org/resources/signage-solutions-for-every-trail-](https://www.americantrails.org/resources/signage-solutions-for-every-trail-system)

[system](https://www.americantrails.org/resources/signage-solutions-for-every-trail-system))

### **Signage Solutions for Every Trail System (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/signage-solutions-for-every-trail-system>)**

posted Jun 11, 2021

Pannier is the leading manufacturer of signs, panels, exhibit bases, and frames. With a full line of exhibit bases, there is a product for every trail and wayside application.



(<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/blm-sign-guidebook>)

### **BLM Sign Guidebook (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/blm-sign-guidebook>)**

posted May 7, 2021

This National Sign Guidebook presents information for planning, designing, fabricating, procuring, installing, and maintaining signs in a clear, complete, and user friendly format.

### **Trail Signage Guidelines (<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/trail-signage-guidelines>)**

posted May 6, 2021

# Trail Signage Guidelines for San José Program



(<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/trail-signage-guidelines>)

The purpose of this document is to provide the required tools for trail planners, designers, and contractors to deploy a cohesive trail signage program throughout the City of San José's Trail Network.

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## Diversity

American Trails supports and encourages respectful, equitable access to outdoor environments that are inviting, inclusive, and beneficial to all.

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