

Bonny State Park

Horse Camping and Riding Information

Camping with horses is allowed near Foster Grove Campground. For your convenience an 11 panel metal corral (Approx. 45 foot diameter) is located within 20 yards of campsite 40. Corral seems to comfortably hold 2 horses and is first come, first serve. Additional horses can be staked out in the grassy area west of the campground. Campsites 40-42 have electrical hookups. Sites 39-30 are non-electric. See campground map for more details. Cost for campsite is \$18 for electric and \$14 for non-electric plus \$6 entrance fee. For reservations call 1-800-678-2267 or 303-470-1144. Larger camping groups may be able to obtain special permission from the park manager to camp in North Cove and East Beach campgrounds. Contact the park office (970) 354-7306 for more details.

For your enjoyment, the Prairie View Trail is a 9-mile long trail that has been mowed into the prairie grass and dry lake bed along the north side of the park that goes all the way from Foster Grove Campground to North Cove Campground and then all the way back to Foster Grove. If a shorter trip is desired, one could take the Merriam Bay Trail to cut the distance by half.

Just outside the entrance of Foster Grove campground to the north, there is for a small sign next to the orange pipe gate. Follow the Prairie View Trail up the hill and to the northeast. This trail crosses the road several times along the way; just keep your eyes open for the brown trail markers. In the Barrow area, (about mid-way in your trip) you will see a part of the park that most visitors have never seen. This is where a large portion of the dirt for the dam was taken and transported across the cove and packed into the dam. This is where the trail forks. A left turn will take you on the Prairie View Trail and into North Cove. A right turn will put you on the Merriam Bay Trail. If go on the Merriam Bay Trail, once a person rides into the dry lakebed you will again have a choice of two directions. A left turn takes one into the OHV area and North Cove. A right turn will take you back to Foster Grove along the old shoreline. If one has time on the Prairie View Trail, visit the Nature Trail above North Cove and take the ¼ mile long loop trail and learn about the loess prairie ecosystem. Please keep your horse on the trail inside this area as there is an endangered plant (Prairie Moon-wart) that is located in the tall grass just off the trail. Once a rider reaches North Cove Campground, water is available at several hydrants from April to October if one carries or drops off their own water bucket.

To get back to Foster Grove along the shoreline, enter the OHV area at the boat ramp and follow one of many trails that head south to southwest. Most the time this area is unoccupied but if your horse is scared of OHV's, you might want to avoid this area if someone is using it. OHV's are only supposed to park and enter this area at the boat ramp so this should tell you if someone else is using the area.

Foster Grove can be reached by following the trail markers and paralleling the shoreline. Since the water went down, this area off the trail grew up in thick trees, which makes it a neat area to ride through. At Bonny Lake State Park, horses are allow to ride anywhere in the park. We just ask they avoid getting close to the water's edge where mud starts to appear so they don't get stuck. This is especially true near the west end of the lake.

Also on the south side of the lake is the Cactus trail that is a 2-mile trail mowed into the prairie (see map). Cactus Trail goes from the corner of the dam near the rock pile, past the cabins, on to the road for a short distance, and crosses near the visitor center on the way to West Beach. The Cactus trail is less used as there is no horse camping on the south side as of yet.