



Best Equestrian Practices

The Village's objectives call for a reliance on the individual responsibilities of land owners as a primary approach to the achievement of community goals. Not the least of those goals are found in the area of the natural ecology of the village. As significant land holders, the equestrian community of Barrington Hills may have the greatest opportunity to assure that horse raising, riding and associated activities have a positive impact on the environmental condition of land and water in the village. Safeguarding surface water (creeks, rivers, ponds, etc.) and groundwater must be an important everyday part of horse keeping. Without voluntary adherence to good horse keeping practices, surface and groundwater are subject to pollution from:

- Sediment from eroding areas such as overgrazed pastures, roads and trails, and bare soil in paddocks, turnouts, corrals and arenas
- Polluted water draining from manure piles and horse wash areas
- Excessive nutrients (from horse waste) that wash off pastures during storms
- Removal of tramped vegetation at streamside areas that can lead to streambank erosion
- Removal of vegetation which filters and absorbs water and pollutants from runoff

The three basic objectives for good horse keeping include:

1. Control erosion – keep soil in place

- Keep areas well vegetated and restore bare areas with vegetation. Plant roots, especially those of grasses, hold soil in place and help water infiltrate into the ground rather than run off. Vegetation also dissipates the force of rainwater hitting the ground, which detaches soil particles.
- Avoid concentrating water. Concentrated runoff can be highly erosive. Try to disperse runoff by spreading it out in a thin, shallow “sheet.” Areas to watch are roads, roofs, compacted soil, and other impermeable surfaces that shed water quickly and increase the amount and velocity of runoff.
- Control horse access and human activities in vulnerable areas such as wetlands, creek banks, meadows and steep hillsides. Limit access, especially during wet periods.
- **Manage pastures to prevent heavy grazing. Avoid soil compaction and excessive removal of vegetation by timing the use of pastures and controlling the number of horses.** Rotate pastures to allow them to rest from grazing, to allow grasses to regrow and mature so they will reseed.
- Use filter strips and riparian buffers near creeks. Maintain a strip of dense grass downslope on bare areas such as paddocks and turnouts to help trap sediment. Riparian buffers provide valuable wildlife habitat and should contain a variety of plants including grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees.
- Keep creek banks vegetated to hold soil in place, trap sediment, and provide valuable wildlife habitat. Grasses have fibrous roots that hold the soil in place. A good indicator of root mass in grasses is the above ground growth generally equals the below ground root system. Shrubs and trees have deeper roots that are either fibrous or taproots that will anchor the soil in place.
- Install kick boards or lay railroad ties or telephone poles around arena perimeters. These will help hold footing material in place and keep it from washing away.