

PAPERCHASE

Materials needed:
4/5 volunteers
corn or surveyor's tape
stakes and mallet
transportation for rough terrain
prizes
lots of food and drink

It's best to choose a fairly large area of woods and fields in which to set up this activity. Normally, the pace is at walk and trot but never underestimate the competitive spirit!! Riders can go in teams of two or more depending on the number present. It is advisable not to let riders go off on their own in case of accidents.

A day or two beforehand, four or five people are needed to set out the "real" trail and a lot of "false" trails branching from the main one. These trails will lead to nowhere thus forcing riders to retrace their steps. There could be a sign, cleverly placed, stating "sorry, end of trail". At the finish, the winning team quickly collects a chip/plate, and rides back to the starting point quietly as not to alert the others that the "game" is won. There can also be chips/plates for second and third: blue, red, and yellow. There should be another chip/plate at the finish that says, "Game over, return to start". Gators or trucks are very useful!! There are a couple of ways to mark the trails: laying corn on the ground (depending on number of ground critters!), or tying surveyor's tape to trees and stakes, preferably at eye level. The first way is, of course, biodegradable; the second must be taken down. The main trail should be fairly long, taking a rider about 30 minutes or so to complete at a trot. This should be timed and laid out beforehand. Of course, hopefully, no rider will find the prize at the end so quickly!! Ideally, the false trails prevent this from happening. Watching riders scratching their heads in frustration is a lot of fun!! Make sure to use your imagination.

After the chips/plates have been found and returned to the organizer, there should be a system to gather the rest of the riders to a central gathering point: either a time limit, a whistle or a car horn. It may be necessary to "sweep" the area for errant equestrians! Hopefully, they will get hungry enough to wend their way back to the start. At this point, food, drink and prizes are distributed to everyone.

That's it. It doesn't take too long to set up and it's a lot of fun. We hope you will try it! If you need further information or "hand holding", please contact Betsy at ebburnett@earthlink.net. I'd be more than happy to help and encourage!