

# Assisting a ride manager helps you, too

---

By Jan Stevens, AERC Vice President

We have all stood in lines -- from what seems like a mile-long checkout line during the holiday shopping rush to waiting to sign in at our favorite endurance ride. Sometimes we wait patiently and sometimes we do not.

To avoid the lines while shopping we can make the choice to shop earlier in the season rather than waiting until the last minute. While we cannot always avoid the line at the endurance ride, we can all help to make it go quicker.

**Pre-register, if at all possible.** Most ride managers will refund most (if not all) of your entry fee if you are unable to attend. If you have changes after you pre-register, e-mail or call the ride manager and let them know prior the event -- keeping them in the loop will help them with their paperwork.

**Make copies.** Make a copy of your entry form, registration papers, membership cards and releases. Bring all of this with you when you go to registration.

**Keep your paperwork in order.** Most riders travel with a binder containing all copies of their horses' information, current health papers and their various memberships. Having all this with you will certainly help if a question comes up. Then you will not be forced to run back to the trailer to get it.

**Don't delay.** Do not wait until five minutes before registration closes to jump in line -- it makes for a cranky ride manager/secretary to see 10 more people show up for registration five minutes before closing when most of the people have been in camp all day.

**Bring your own pen.** Believe me, ride managers appreciate this. A lot.

While getting your paperwork in early is a great help to most ride managers, there are many other things that we all can do to help the ride manager with their ride.

**Write a note.** Find out who the land manager is where the ride is being hosted. Is it a private landowner? USFS? BLM? Park Service? Get their address and send them a thank you note after the ride. Tell them how much you appreciate the ability to ride on their land.

**Park smart.** Know your rig and how to park it before you pull into a base camp. If you can, take time to do a walk-around. Make sure you can get it out of the parking spot if you need to.

**Clean up camp before you leave.** Find out what the protocol is for manure and hay, etc. -- scatter it, bag it, pile it, etc. Most riders are pretty good at this, I will admit.

**If you are not riding, offer to help the ride.** Most ride managers have volunteers who unfortunately have to cancel at the last minute. Offering to fill in for that missing volunteer can really make a difference.

**Consider crewing.** Again, if you are not riding, offer to help a fellow rider. Many riders do not have the luxury of a crew; offering to help a rider can really brighten a person's day!

**Don't whine.** Do not complain about the weather . . . honestly, the ride manager would fix it if it was possible!

**Sit in on a new rider meeting.** Offer advice or, better yet, offer to mentor a rider if you can. Make a new friend -- reach out!

**Say thank you.** Send the ride manager a thank you note.

Making things easier on the ride manager will overall help you with your experience at the event. Sour grapes usually do not help make things go better (you might be asked if you want any "cheese with your whine"), so keep in mind that constructive criticism is better than a full-blown chewing out!