

## **Freedom OPRC Photo Scavenger Hunt Trail Ride**

### **Overview**

A scavenger hunt is a fun and easy way to spice up a trail ride. In this version, the items are primarily natural ones found at our local park. The idea is that each rider or team of riders is handed a sheet of pics of items and rides a marked trail looking for them. The items should be within a specific distance from the marked trail, such as 20 feet. Each item is “collected” by photographing it with a digital camera or cell phone. The event is timed and the winner(s) is determined by the person or team who collected the most items in the time allotted. To make it even more interesting, and harder, a few items can be non-stationary or completely random, like a deer, eagle, feather, or frog.

### **Running the scavenger hunt**

1. Select a location
2. Find your workers
3. Select the items to “collect” with your camera
4. Organize the pics of your items for riders
5. Define your rules
6. Materials
7. Prizes or ribbons
8. Entries, divisions, and paperwork
9. Final setup
10. Scoring

### **Select a location**

Horse friendly! Your favorite park will do, or a private farm if you have one available. You can also select a location that is hiker friendly, and run two concurrent events – one that is mounted and one that is unmounted to appeal to non-riding spouses and kids, as well as the hikers in your park. It is highly recommended that riders and non-riders do not share the same trails, but should both share in the entries and awards parts of your event.

### **Find your workers**

You will need several designated volunteers, although duties can be shifted around in any way you like:

- One or two persons to identify the items, take photos, mark the trail, and prepare the clues. This took us three advance rides: initial scoping of the location, taking pics of a large number of possible items, and marking the trail just before the Scavenger Hunt. The trail marking was also when we checked to be sure items we had selected were still there: did someone move that log? Had a sign blown over? Was the trail we wanted to use still safely rideable?
- One or two persons to handle the paperwork, preparing entry forms, plenty of participant pic sheets, and rules sheets.
- Someone will need to collect prizes and/or ribbons to hand to winners.
- Someone to contact the local newspaper to get coverage for your event.
- Two or three persons to run the entry booth on the day of the event, do the scoring, and ensure everyone has brought their coggins!
- A starter person, to record the time each team left the starting line.
- End of ride checkers – someone to review the photos collected against the list needed.

### **Select the items to “collect” with your camera**

- Decide whether you will use all natural items or items you will place in the park, or both. Natural items support enjoying the park’s natural beauty, and are consistent with the national park theme of “take only pictures, leave only footprints.” However, natural items will need to be given a final check the day before the event to be sure their natural state has not changed!
- Placed items can be any that you choose – perhaps a theme that your chapter enjoys, or jokey items, or some based on colors or the alphabet.

- Once you have selected the items, take a photo of each of them, preferably in the location it will be during the event. You will use this photo as your reference when scoring. Then make a note of its surroundings and where it sits on the trail – so you can find it again if needed!
- Make an attempt to spread the items out along the trail, to keep the whole ride interesting and to keep each rider / team separate so following teams can't crib off the team preceding them. It should be a fairly short ride, perhaps no longer than 5 miles, because some time will be spent searching for the items!
- The items should be visible and photographable without dismounting.
- To reduce the wait while scoring, you can have someone collect the sheets after the last item, and allow the riders to continue on their way while scoring is completed. This also makes the ride a little longer.

### **Organize your photos**

- The photos can be produced legibly with about 12 pics per page.
- Save paper by using both sides of the page for a total of 24 pics. That turned out to be plenty of items to reduce the number of ties.
- Decide if you will place the photos in order, or randomly. Randomly makes it a little harder.
- You'll find that people very familiar with the park or riding location will know right off where some of the items are, so you'll want a few that are more challenging: lichen on a tree, a moving item such as a turtle, a specific formation of branches.

### **Rules**

- Teams leave the starting line at least 4 minutes apart.
- No cantering or galloping.
- No crowding the team in front of you, although requesting to pass is allowed.
- Photos must be clear enough to match the organizers' photos in order to count.
- All items will be within 20 feet of the marked trail (or whatever distance you choose).
- Only those items "collected" during the (2-hour) time limit will be counted.

### **Materials needed**

- Digital camera
- Small pencils
- Paper copies of the item picture list
- Flyers
- Entry forms
- Score sheets
- Pens and pencils
- Prizes or ribbons
- Trail markers
- Cash box
- Table and chairs

### **Select prizes or ribbons**

What do members of your chapter like? What about the other local riding clubs? Are ribbons the thing? Perhaps your local tack shop, or even hardware store, would like to donate items for prizes. The number of ribbons is related to the number of divisions you establish, and how many deep you would like to place each division – 6 places? 10? 3? Your call. The point is *"... for the learning experience, the fun, the camaraderie; not the ribbon, or the glory, but for the memories."*

### **Entries and divisions**

#### **Entries**

Entry forms should capture division entered (if applicable), rider names, horse names, ages (if applicable), and a section to record coggins and payment information. Keep it simple. Your entry person might have seven people standing in front of her at one time trying to sign up. Coggins forms should be examined by the entry person, just as in any event. Decide how much your entry fee will be, if any. If it's a benefit ride, try to provide the appropriate tax

deduction form right on the spot. Otherwise, followup with a mailing so participants can claim the deduction if they choose.

### Divisions

Think about how many divisions you would like. Separate by novice (new rider, or green horse), intermediate, or advanced. Or create divisions based on age groupings: 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61+. Or perhaps by age or breed of horse! Age of riders is the easiest way to separate individuals. If you want to run the event with teams, you might not need any divisions at all, but perhaps launch 15 or 30 teams against each other. If you add an unmounted segment, this would be a separate division. The easiest method would be for teams of two, but consider how you will handle singles – add to make a team of three or allow a single person to compete against the teams? Either way, focus on the fun of it.

### Final setup

- Finalize the trail markings and ensure items remain in their designated locations.
- Ensure parking is adequate and safe.
- Decide where you will hold entries.
- Set up entry table and chairs.
- Lay out entry forms, paperwork, and pens and pencils.
- Ensure you have someone who will be there until the end to clean up around the site.

### Scoring

- Scoring is pretty straightforward. With copy of item pics in hand, verify how many pics the rider or team found by comparing photos in camera or cell phone to the pic list.
- To save time, scoring can be started while riders continue to enjoy the trails. For example, somewhere after the last scavenger item on the trail, have someone collect item sheets from the teams and begin to score them.
- Count only those item sheets that are turned in before the end of your time limit.
- There is the potential for ties, so plan ahead by designating tie breaker items in advance. Perhaps allow extra points for harder items, such as a deer or hawk, or a feather. Or pick difficult or obscure items, and the winner is determined by the number of these difficult items “collected”.
- Count the number of items (points) “collected”, and break any ties.

Award your prizes and cheer yourselves for putting on a great event! And don't forget to get your local paper to write it up, and submit a copy and photos to the national OPRC web site!