

Ride manager's to do list, starting with your concept plan.

I find it very difficult to put a timeline on ride planning. Each RM, the timing of the ride and ride location have their own set of variables. I can give a list of logical progression from hope to ride day. If the new RM is taking over an existing ride, much of this becomes easier. First step is to talk to the retiring RM and get as much information as possible.

1. Look at the existing ride calendar, both for EDRA and AERC.

Existing rides will have priority to keep the ride on the usual date. New rides get what's left.

Ideally, there will be at least 2 weeks between EDRA rides. As a courtesy to riders, picking a date on the same date as an AERC ride should be avoided, if possible. If unavoidable, your ride should be 250-300 miles away from the AERC ride. Make a list of possible dates:

2. Scout out a ride camp location.

Is it accessible for large rigs?

Is there ample flat parking?

Is there easy access to the trails you want to use?

Is there enough distance to offer your mileage options without a lot of repeat trail?

How far is it from your water source?

How far is it from your home? The farther away, the more challenging some details become.

- What time of year is best for your ride?

What are the weather barriers? Heat, rain, snow, etc.

How severe is summer fire danger?

Is the area used for hunting? Find out dates.

3. Research the identity of all landowners including the ride camp location and all possible trails to be used on your ride. Be very thorough. Missing either a private or public landowner can cause huge problems later on and possibly get your ride cancelled.

4. Contact each landowner to see if permission to ride on their property is possible.

Pick some dates that do not conflict with other users and are compatible with the current ride schedule.

If dealing with the federal or state government, ask about any generic restrictions, CWF, campfire protocol, use of motorized vehicles for trail clearing and marking, water access and delivery, gates, etc.

If there are private landowners, liability is probably the biggest single obstacle. If they are running livestock, concern over gates will be another topic of discussion.

1. make sure you have permission to ride on their property.
2. scout out trails and ask permission to put on an event with insurance of course.
3. always make sure landowners know exactly what trails you propose to use for the event
4. ALWAYS inform them of any changes you might make
5. not much different then dealing with FS except usually no fee is involved

6. Ask if there will be a charge for use of the property
7. offer a written appraisal detailing what you are asking for and what the landowner requires. Include any restrictions.

5. Begin the application process for special use permits, if any of the ride will be on federal property. For a new permit, allow at least 6 months from application to approval.

A permit application is required. See example. If approved, it may be approved for anywhere from 1 year to 5 years. READ IT. IT'S VERY LONG, BUT IT'S MOSTLY DETAILING WHAT YOU ARE AGREEING TO.

An Operating Plan is required along with the permit application. It is very detailed. Even if you have a 5-year permit, the Operating Plan is resubmitted each year. Not sure about the Safety Plan.

An Event Safety Plan is now required, as well.

A detailed map for your proposed trails must accompany the operating plan. Some USFS offices are requiring detailed gps tracks. EDRA also requires them for ride endorsement.

6. Apply for endorsement with EDRA.

Fill out the required form located on the EDRA website and send with endorsement fee to: endorsement@equinedistanceriding.com Snail Mail: 3691 Beck Road Rice WA. 99167. \$250 Payment to EDRA Treasurer 205 N Main Colville WA. 99114.

7. Once endorsed, apply for EDRA insurance.

Include every landowner as a named insured.

Make sure each landowner receives a copy

Ask for a copy of the policy so that you know what is covered.

8. Determine distances being offered. New RMs should probably avoid 75-100 mile distances, unless you have a lot of help from experienced ride managers. Experienced 100 mile riders will be very cautious about signing up for a new 100 miler being managed by a new manager. The possibilities for crises go up with increased distances. Also, avoid 2 day 100s. Just doesn't make sense. If you are planning 2 or 3 days, be sure you have enough trail to offer different loops each day. If your trail allows it, consider offering an elevator ride. Ask an experienced ride manager how to do it, if interested. Your trail must be laid out to make it work.

9. Establish a budget. Some of your expenses will be incurred prior to any income being generated.

Have some money set aside for these:

Advertising and copying

Endorsement fee

Veterinarians

Awards

Porta potties

Landowner fees

Clean up costs

Fuel for water trucks, getting supplies, trips to ride camp, ambulance driver, etc

Food costs: Do you plan to just feed your vets and volunteers or are you supplying meals for the riders? Catered meals can become very expensive. Create a budget early on.

Trail marking supplies, ribbon, stakes, signs, glow sticks, if necessary, etc

Office supplies

Hay costs for VCs and camp

10. Search for veterinarians. Start with a potential Vet list, with locations and contact info. Determine your head veterinarian first. Next, determine how many additional vets will be needed to safely manage your ride. Be prepared to offer lodging to any out of town vets you employ. Head vet should be experienced with endurance rides. EDRA rules require a treatment vet also be designated. This should not be the head vet in best practice. The head vet has too many other responsibilities to be tied up treating a horse.

11. Read and accept all EDRA rules. Don't assume you know what is expected of you.

12. Request a ride steward be assigned by the EDRA BOD.

13. Trail lay out: Do not go anywhere without the landowner's permission.

Trail layout is critical for a number of reasons. EDRA requires gps tracks of your trail to verify the mileage claimed.

1. Find loops with little repeat trail. Avoid 2-way traffic, if at all possible.
2. Each loop must return to camp eventually covering whatever mileage you have mapped.
3. Water tank placement is critical. Especially in summer months, tanks should be placed every 6-7 miles. If you find the most awesome loop you've ever ridden but with no road access for 20 miles, find another alternative. If some or all of your water stops are from natural sources, be absolutely certain that they are still viable sources at the time of your ride. Water should be available near the top of a long climb
4. Are there access points where an injured rider or horse can be located and gotten to safety?
5. How many gates must be opened and closed?
6. If there are water crossings or hazardous trail sections, are they safe for 50+ horses to cross without deteriorating?
7. If you anticipate a night loop, is it accessible on a quad to hang glow sticks and easy enough for riders to complete in the dark?
8. If you are planning a loop more than 25 miles, there needs to be an out VC. Make sure the area you chose is accessible with truck and horse trailer, in case of any pulls and for water tank and porta potty placement. The vets need a flat, relatively obstacle free trot out area. There should be crew parking, if crews are allowed to go. A location with cell service is ideal, in case of emergency and being in communication with ride camp to report pulls and injuries. Tell your vets, volunteers and rider's crews how far and how long it will take to drive there. Written directions are most helpful.
9. Is this trail reasonable to clear, maintain and mark? Use of motorized vehicles allowed? If not, do you have a plan for clearing, marking and unmarking on horseback, bicycle or on foot?

10. Try to avoid trails heavily used by other recreationalists.
11. Each loop starting location and the finish line need to be clearly visible. Have a finish line that will allow racing without putting anyone in jeopardy.
 - a. Start should be in an open area, such as a road or at least 2 track, so that riders who want to pass can do so safely. Having a hill in the first few miles is helpful to get the horses more focused but can cause metabolic issues for unfit or not warmed up horses. If a wide open start isn't possible, consider a controlled start.
 - b. The finish line must be clearly visible. Put up a sign or put a white line across the road. It is also helpful to put up a warning sign about 1/4 to 1/2 mile from the finish that it is approaching.
 - c. Same is true for the VCs, either in camp or out. Gives the riders an opportunity to slow down.

14. Necessary trail supplies:

Water hauling:

Enough water tanks for camp, out VCs and on the trail.

Some water hauling bladder or tanker. 300+ gallons is efficient

Water pump and hose, if pumping out of natural water. Adequate hose hook up if pumping from a spigot.

Truck and trailer to haul tanks to placement locations.

Volunteer to do the above

Trail clearing and marking:

Chain saws, fuel, hand saws, clippers, etc

Shovel and rake

Many rolls of white ribbon to use with each loop color

Each loop needs to be a different color

Have an extra color for marking to the out VC, if needed

Paper plates or other waterproof signage

Staple gun and stakes

Lime or flour for marking. Costco has cheap 50 lb sacks of flour.

Clothes pins for attaching trail markings to trees. Dollar Stores have them, so does Walmart.

Buy 100s. A big advantage for using clothespins is that in areas where deer, elk or cattle are likely to eat your ribbons, they will not bother the clothespins, and usually there is a little ribbon left on them.

Washable spray paint works well for marking on rocks or trees. Be sure you color code with the loop color.

Volunteers go well before the ride to help clear trail, if necessary. For EDRA members needing service hours, these count. Make sure you have adequate tools for heavy clearing, if anticipated.

Trail marking: make sure you have volunteers marking trail who know where it goes. If possible, have the same people mark a whole loop. It is really unnerving to some riders to encounter inconsistent markings. That usually happens when there are different people markings sections of the same loop. ALWAYS MARK TRAIL IN THE DIRECTION THE TRAIL WILL BE RIDDEN! Be consistent with spacing. Use either the fat yellow caution tape or 3 ribbons to mark turns. Then mark the turn with 1-2

additional ribbons close after the turn. Use lime or flour lines to mark off any roads or trails to be avoided. Use arrows to add directional clarity.

Some means of carrying large quantities of ribbons. Some volunteers like clipping them to loops of baler twine to hang around their necks. Some stuff them in bags or backpacks. Some decorate their horse with them.

Glow sticks, if a night trail. I use green for marking and red for turns and water tanks. Use zip ties to attach them to the clothespin markings. Easy to attach and remove. The ribbons that come with the glow sticks get horribly tangled up. I use about 75-80 for a 20 mile loop, plus 25 red ones. Shop online for the best price for the 12 hour 6" variety. Smaller ones are not worth the money. Dollar Store items are very poor quality and frequently don't work. You do not want to end up with a bunch of duds.

Put out as many signs as you have time for.

You should have spotters at any intersection that could be confusing or make trail cutting possible.

If you have an out and back, put a pail of some items at the end at the turn around. Each rider needs to come back with one. Small stickers that can adhere to the vet card work well.

Camp supplies:

- Large sandwich board sign for out on the road directing riders to camp

- Sign board near registration with any announcements and large trail map posted

- Camp and ride rules printed out for each rider, include hold times and mileage between VCs.

- Scale for BC weighing

- Night lighting and generator , if needed

- Water for riders at VCs, if not in camp

- Ability to prepare food, even if you have it catered

- Office, preferably indoors, in the event of bad weather

- Canopy for timers and ride volunteers

- CWF hay, if required

- necessary ride paperwork

- written directions to the out VCs

- Sandwich bags for vet cards

- Garbage bags for manure pick up, if required.

Order porta potties: I recommend 2 near the vetting area and several placed around ride camp. Estimate about 1 for every 25-30 people expected. They really add to your cost, so be conservative. If there are out VCs on USFS property, a porta potty is required at each one. If the locations are remote, ask for portables and haul them out there prior to the ride. Tip: if any are located near hiking or other recreational areas, put a lock on the door. Otherwise, your porta potty may be full before the first rider arrives at the VC.

15. Volunteers: For EDRA members needing service hours, these count.

- In timer and out timer for each VC and camp

- Pulsers - 1-2 per vet ideal, minimum 2

- Vet secretaries, 1 per vet

Ride Steward for dispute resolution

16. Awards: can be whatever you want and can afford.

If you have an intro ride that is inexpensive, I've just given certificates. First, most trail riders don't stay for awards, and really don't expect anything. Second, I personally don't really want to encourage this distance.

Some rides give nicer completion awards for the longer distances. Some give the same award to everyone. Some give "completion" awards to all starters. Some just award those who finish. It's personal preference. My absolute requirement is that I don't give out anything that doesn't have my ride name on it. Avoid putting a date on them in case you have leftovers.

Riders have come to expect additionally, 1st place and top 10 for each distance. Also, an overall BC award must be available. EDRA also encourages RMs to give junior 1st place and BC awards, if at least 2 juniors start a distance. Some rides give tail end and mid pack awards, too. Those are awards that you can usually get donated.

Shopping for awards is half the fun of managing a ride. Start with your budget and then see what you can find. I try to buy from local businesses, endurance specialty businesses, and fellow endurance riders who produce an applicable product. Riding Warehouse (a great endurance supporter) gives a discount to event purchases. Call them and ask for details.

17. Publicity: you can't have too much!

- PNER handbook deadline is Feb 1

- PNER and EDRA websites will post the ride flyers

- Create a Facebook page and a website, if you can

- Post frequent updates. Darlene Anderson is a master at publicizing her rides. Talk to her if you want advice.

- Find other equestrian group's Facebook groups. Post on EDRA and PNER FB groups.

18. Creating your ride flyer: Personally, I think the more information you can include on your ride flyer, the better. Look through the ride flyers in the PNER handbook for ideas on what is important. Obviously, you need the ride name, date, distances offered, directions, cost, and trail description. If you want pre-entries, detail how to do it.

19. Riders enjoy having a photographer at the ride. Find a photographer with outdoor experience. No expense to the RM, unless you use the photos as completion awards.

Next installment will be the week of the ride activities, including ride day(s).