

Come Out & Try
"The Thinking Horse Sport"

Competitive Mounted
Orienteering



Learn new trails, explore new places and meet nice people while having fun with your horse!

Competitive Mounted Orienteering is a nonprofit organization intended to be a safe, inexpensive and fun equine activity for all riders. Conducted in such a manner as to both encourage competition among those seeking a competitive event and to encourage casual, family style riding for those wishing a less challenging event. Competitors may ride single or in teams.

C.M.O. has often been described as a "mounted treasure hunt". Event organizers provide instruction and the maps with clues. Participants furnish their own mounts and compasses. Using these tools, riders search for designated "objective stations" (paper plates with letters to be recorded to prove they were found) inside a 3/4 mile circled area on the event map. Clues for each station are listed on the back of the map with intersecting compass bearings pointing at the hidden plate. The goal is to find all the hidden plates and record the letters in the shortest amount of time. Riders travel at their own pace and also determine which order to find the stations.

Each event is divided into long (10 Objectives) and short (5 Objectives) course divisions. Typical rides can cover 5 to 25 miles. Members and their horses accumulate points for annual National and State awards and ribbons are awarded at each ride through 6th place on the long course and 3rd place on the short course.

Events are staged out of horse camps and riding areas all across the state and country. Weekend rides sometimes have a potluck dinner (check the ride flyer) and a campfire on Saturday nights to hand out ribbons and to visit and laugh about strategies that did or didn't work.

You can give it a try as a day member for \$5 (insurance fee) plus the regular members ride fee (about \$10 depending on the location) per day. Annual membership dues are \$30 (Families) or \$20 (Individual). State dues are \$5 to \$10 depending on each State. Having a National and State membership qualifies each rider and their horse for lifetime awards.

All breeds and disciplines are WELCOME!

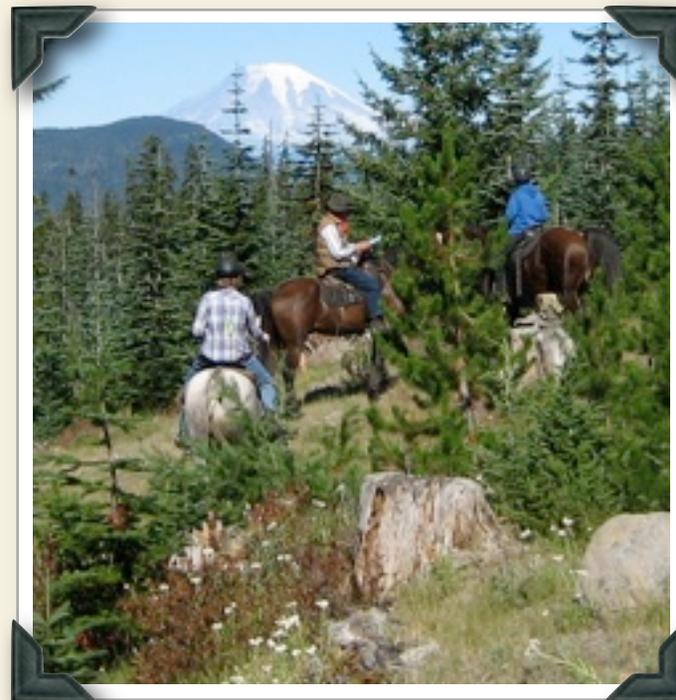


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There is usually a six-hour time limit; sometimes this is extended at the discretion of the ride manager depending on the distance and terrain. Most rides average two to four hours.

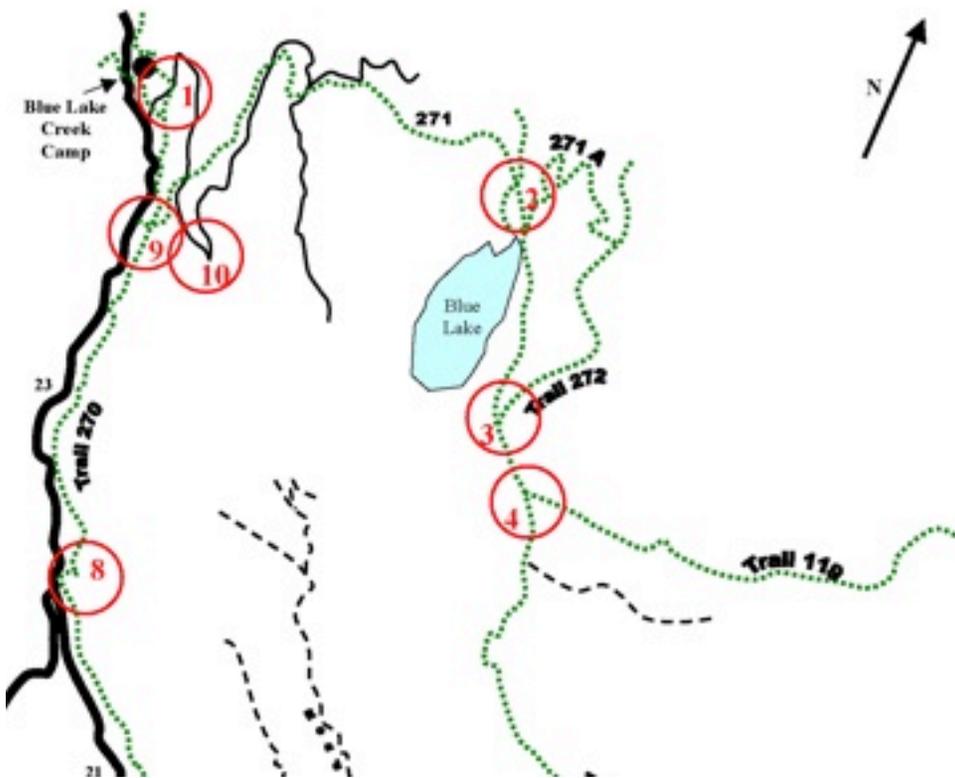
Now that you know a little more about this game....come out and play!



On this map, the competitor can choose to go EAST from the staging area on either trail that crosses the road in the circle of #1. Remember the clues or landmarks can be along any trail or road within the circle marked on the map.

The objective you are searching for is a hidden 9-inch paper plate (See the example on page 7)

After locating the clues to #1 and finding your objective station, the direction you choose to travel for your next objective is up to you. On this map you can either head EAST for your #2 objective or SOUTH for #9 & #10. There is some strategy involved, trying to pick the shortest way around the course and taking the terrain into consideration. This ride was in very steep terrain and heading EAST to #2 was a VERY steep uphill for approx. two and a half miles. Heading SOUTH was fairly level for several miles and the climb up was more gradual. It doesn't matter which direction or order you obtain your objectives. The goal is to have all ten when you ride into camp.....or all five if you're riding the short course.



WHAT IS C.M.O.?

The letters C.M.O. stand for **Competitive Mounted Orienteering**.

C.M.O. is “**competitive**” because you compete, as an individual or a team, against other riders to find all of the hidden objective stations. This is a timed event and you compete for a placing for that ride. The points you and your horse earn add up towards year-end placing and lifetime points with the National Association of Competitive Mounted Orienteering (N.A.C.M.O.) and your State organization.

The “**mounted**” part of the name is because the game is played on horseback. In theory, you shouldn't have to ever get off the horse as each objective station should be visible from horseback.

And, finally, “**orienteering**” because you must be able to orient your self on a provided map and find your way around the course. The use of a map and compass, navigating your way around the designated course, identifying landmarks and finding the objective stations is what orienteering is all about.

What C.M.O. is NOT, is an endurance or competitive riding race. In those sports, you follow a set course for a set distance and try to make the best time of all the competitors while getting a good “health” reading for your horse.

In C.M.O. you use your map to pick your route to find all the objective stations in whatever manner and following whatever route you think is best to get around the course. Ingenuity, strategy and creativity are all useful.

Like endurance or competitive riding, however, the longer courses can cover many miles over all types of terrain. Common sense says you should have your horse in good shape and conditioned if you plan on riding long distances.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN A C.M.O.?

Anyone can participate. Children under eighteen need to be accompanied or have signed permission by a parent or guardian. Families are welcome to ride as a group and some rides offer group discounts or discounts to teams with junior members.

All equines are welcome but must be at least three years old to participate.



WHAT DO YOU NEED TO RIDE A C.M.O.?

First you need a **horse**. It is, after all, a mounted sport. Any type of equine is allowed. Mules, ponies, show horses, horses off the track and backyard pets are welcome. Your horse must be at least three years old to compete.

You will also need a **compass, small writing pad and pencil**.

Other suggested items would be weather appropriate clothing, water, first aid supplies, lunch, and horse water and feed. Not all areas where rides are sponsored have potable water or water for your horse.

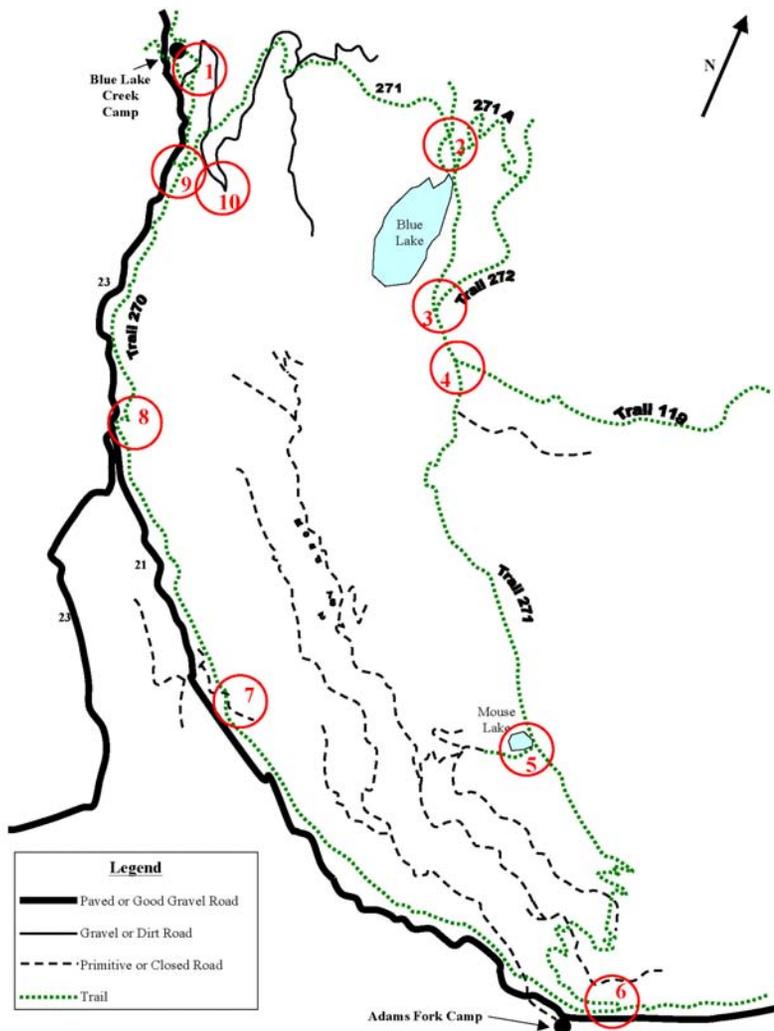
#1 130 from the Woodpecker Stump on the south side of the trail.

114 from Wooden Post with a faded pink ribbon.

34 from a Swallow Condo on a stump.



SAMPLE MAP



When first learning how to ride C.M.O.'s, it is best to ride slowly, watching the trail carefully, making sure the rider can identify his position on the map at all times. Then as the rider nears the area encompassing the circle on the map, the top priority is on identifying the landmarks, not speed. It takes more time to come back to find one you missed then to ride slowly and find it the first time!

HOW TO USE A COMPASS FOR C.M.O.

If you don't have a compass for your first ride, most Ride Managers have a few to loan to new riders.

This is a map reading compass. It can be laid on top of a map to determine the direction of an area or location.



In Competitive Mounted Orienteering, the numbers on the dial and the arrows of the compass are used to take the readings from each landmark helping to locate each station.

Hold the compass in the flat of your hand (away from your watch, metal saddle horn or other metal objects). Turn the dial until the number you want lines up with the arrow pointing toward the end of the compass (shown here above the "N").

Example: At objective #1, one of the readings was 260 from the sign post. Ride up to the sign post and turn the dial of the compass until 260 lines up with the line above the arrow above the dial. Then since this reading is a "from" you turn the entire compass (or turn yourself or your horse) until the red end of the needle lines up with the red lines on the face of the compass that point toward the arrow.

Once the red needle is inside the red lines drawn on the compass face, the arrow should be pointing towards the hidden objective.

If your reading is a "to" you then turn your entire compass (or yourself or your horse) until the white end of the needle lines up with the arrow.

A SAMPLE C.M.O.

Map in hand you set off down the trail. Let's see....what is the most direct route to objective #1 where the trail crosses the road. Okay, you see the shortest way. You set off at a trot, taking advantage of this portion of trail you can make good time on.

As you ride, you hold the reins in one hand and the map in the other, trying to read the clues on its reverse side. This is no small feat at a brisk trot. There are three landmarks you have to watch for. One is "Wood Pecker Stump on South side of trail", another is "Wooden post with faded pink ribbon" and yet another is "A Swallow Condo on a stump".



Okay, you know what to watch for. Since you're approaching the area where the trail crosses the road you are in the center of the objective area. As you near the trail junction you watch for any of these three landmarks. Finding the first one will tell you you're in the right place. Ah, you can see the "Wood Pecker Stump". The "Wooden post with the faded pink ribbon" is nearby.

The compass reading for the "Wood Pecker stump" is 130 degree from the log. You tell your partner to take that reading. You're going on a little further to the "Wooden post with the faded pink ribbon". After taking your 114 degree reading you



look back at your partner to see where his reading is pointing. Your reading should intersect with it.

Down the road you see the "Swallow condo on a stump" and ride down and take a 34 degree reading. Yea, you've found all the clues, now it should be an easy thing to find the hidden objective.

You and your partner both head to the point where the readings intersect and begin to look around.

Oh no, another team is riding up! Now you will have to be sneaky. Quietly the two of you begin to look in larger and larger circles around the point where the three readings intersected.

Engrossed in the task of searching the wooded area, you almost miss seeing your partner start to ride off down the trail towards the next area circled on the map. Did he find the plate?

You don't want to shout after him and ask him. If you alert the other team to the fact he just found the plate, they will look in the spot he was standing before he rode away. That would save them some time.

You act confused and mumble something about checking readings with him. Riding over, you ask him about that last reading (while whispering the question – Has he found the plate?) He whispers back, "Yes", but the two of you ride to a decoy spot and pretend to hunt there a moment before riding off together.

Once out of sight of the other team, he reads the letters from the plate to you and you write them in your notebook. Then you both pick up a trot to put distance between you and the other team on your way to the next station. Let's see.....where was that circle and what are the next landmarks.

