



# Keeping Horses On The Land

Students will experience the equine landscape from the perspective of human and natural history and demonstrate an understanding of conservation and sustainability issues that affect a horse farm.



Engage!

Welcome students to the farm with an enthusiastic greeting and farm safety statement. Use a circle-up to review the rules. Ask students what they think might see as they walk with you on a farm tour. Explain that not all farms are alike and that equestrian farms have landscapes different from grain or other livestock farms



Explore!

Take students on a farm tour. Break into smaller groups if necessary. Take different routes and stop at 5-8 places along the tour that have a human or natural history connection.

Discuss conservation or economic issues that are important to farm management and planning. Use comparative questioning to help students relate to what they see and hear.

Does your farm fence horses out of streams? Make this a stop on the farm tour and explain how this practice contributes to help preserve the Chesapeake Bay.

What happens to the water that runs off impermeable surfaces at your farm? Stop at water retention ponds, look at gutter systems, observe paved areas. What is the cost to the farmer for constructing or installing water control and diversion systems? How do these practices protect the health of horses and people? How do these practices improve and protect the natural environment and the Chesapeake?

## Explain

Play a game of **Silent Line Up** with prepared cards that feature important dates of the farm's history as well as general history of the landscape in which the farm is located.

Assign each student a Line Up card to read to themselves. Do not show the cards to classmates! Given the signal to start, students will attempt to line up according to their date from oldest to most recent. Using only gestures, signals, or pantomime - and not showing their cards to others - students will form a timeline. When the timeline is complete, students may read aloud their cards to the group. Perform for fun! Correct any mistakes and review the timeline of the farm.

## Elaborate

Take students to the fields to find the horses. Take along a chart paper pad and markers. Divide students into teams of four to map how horses use the equine landscape.

### Guiding Questions:

*Where do horses travel?*

*Why do they chose the routes they travel?*

*Where, why, and when do they gather?*

*What parts of the equine landscape are attractive to horses?  
Why?*

*Where do horses relieve themselves? Is there a preferred area that they use?*

Students should observe horse behavior and note how they move across the land. Map areas where they graze. Map areas where horses observe their surroundings. Include fences and gates. Use symbols to describe the types of fencing used. Map structures and farm lanes. Use hoof print symbols to map the paths taken by horses across the pastures and fields.

As students observe the horses, continue to use guiding questions that build on knowledge of horse biology and behavior.

*Why do horses form herds?*

*Can you observe herd behavior in other animals?*



*What large predators may have hunted wild horses long ago in this region? Where are those predators now?*

*Since horses have been domesticated by humans, what do we do to protect herds?*

*What do humans do to protect the landscape in areas where herds are concentrated?*

When student maps are finished, ask teams to display and discuss their work. Invite a staff person or land manager to comment upon the maps and add additional information about how the horses and the landscape are both protected with specific strategies employed on the farm.



Play a round of **Two Card Match** to assess student knowledge of the topics of the day. Scatter a **set of cards** face down on the ground that have images, words, or phrases (a pair each) that relate to the day's topics.

Circle students around the face-down cards and have them flip cards to discover a match - one flip per turn. No clues or hints allowed! As matches are made have students share what they learned about the topic. Leave matched cards face up.