



P.O. Box 57 Durham, CT 06422-0057

Meeting Minutes for March 13th, 2012

Attending:

Leslie Lewis, Meg Sautter, Ruth Beardsley, Laurie Giannotti, Judy Beliveau, Amy Stegall, Diane Ciano and Guests; Eric Hammerling and Laurianne Goulet.

Call To Order:

The meeting was held at the Northeast Utilities Building in Berlin, CT. Meeting called to order at 6:04PM.

Guest Speaker Introduction: Eric Hammerling from CT Forest & Park Association (CFPA), commented on the importance of the Equine Advisory Council. It's roll as liaison between the legislative arm of the State of Connecticut, as well as CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) , the CT Horse Council (CHC) and CFPA. Eric also stated that the EAC process is working well and stressed that all of these entities need to work together to insure that our existing and future trail systems throughout the State of Connecticut remain open to all.

And he suggested that we work together on the language of signage within the State's parks and forests in order to present clarity to the trail user, what should and should not be traveled by walkers, bikers, and equestrians.

He said he would follow-up with reported incidents of alleged verbal abuse that occurred on the Shenipsit SF Trail System between members of The Volunteer Horse Patrol (VHP) and a volunteer CFPA member. Discussion ensued regarding the 'gun club property' which is currently not marked as a CFPA Multi-Use Trail however, has been historically used by the local equestrians from that area as well as members of The Reddington Rock Riding Club.

Discussion was had regarding the CFPA Blue Blaze trails - its marking of existing old trails, cart roads historically used by equestrians and/or its re-routing of trails, closing and approval of new trails within the DEEP properties. The CHC has made comments in the past to DEEP & CFPA regarding trail use changes from multi use to single use without any knowledge given prior to marking of blue-blazed trails to equestrians. Laurie G. stated that she will add an EAC representative onto DEEP existing email list so EAC will know the internal dialogue regarding trail changes before any changes takes effect.

Eric also stated the CFPA's preferred trail surface is in fact – unpaved. And that they have few wheel chair access Blue Blaze trails.

Review Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes of Dec 13, 2011 were reviewed, edited and accepted. Motion by Leslie to accept as corrected, Meg 2nd, Motion carried.

Web Page for EAC Update:

Laurie will upload EAC Meeting Minutes to EAC website.

Laurie will update EAC's new meeting night (Thursday's) onto the EAC website.

Laurie will add a 'Horseback Riding' page to the EAC website as well. This will help direct equestrians to the CHC and DEEP websites where they can find trail information and forest or park maps.

Laurie will upload an 'Equestrian Map' with links to both DEEP sides.

First map – Natchaug, Airline/Goodwin maps -1st draft from Laurie.

** Laurie to upload CHC-VHP 2011 Trail Maintenance Hours and cost savings to CT residents.

Meg is to provide Laurie with the current figures including 2011 as to 'How many volunteer hours and cost savings that the CHC-VHP has recorded since 2003.

STATE PARK & FOREST Updates:

Lost Silver mine Horse Camp Update:

Diane submitted a bill for \$4,541.97 to Laurie to cover the following costs; kiosk, brochure holders, yellow diamond markers, campsite marker posts, excavation work & labor.

She reports that as of June 2010, CHC has dedicated 527.5 volunteer hours to the total project of the grant of \$48,900.00 by recording camp clearing, trail patrols and maintenance hours, along with installing the kiosk. The total in-kind services for the 20% grant at \$19.50 per hour is a grand total of **\$10,276.50** which has been met.

The next phase will be to install the campsite posts, solar toilets (working with Scott Dawley) and to purchase picnic tables.

NATCHAUG SF. Update:

Diane reported that Jean Morrison (CHC-VHP) member is marking 5 & 10 mile loop trails.

Laurie noted that the new DEEP supervisor for the Mashamoquet Area is Lori Lindquist.

SHENIPSIT SF. Update:

See attached Report from Jan Collins.

GOODWIN SF. Update:

See attached Report from Jan Collins.

SCANTIC RIVER LINEAR SP Update:

See attached Report from Jan Collins.

NIPMUCK SF Update:

Nothing to report.

BISSELL TRAIL:

In working with DEEP Vinny Messino, CHC-VHP members were able to clear the extensive damage left in the wake of both major storms of 2011.

ROARABACK WMA:

Parking lot issue needs to be addressed with DEEP & WMA on Swimming Hole Road in Harwinton. Large tree in middle of the small lot inhibits trailer parking . The lot can easily be made larger by removing this tree and some other smaller trees to accommodate better parking for trailers.

LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION:

CHC is currently working on three major bills right now; SB111 – Amy to follow-up with, possible cross-walk modifications and minor language modifications.

The Vulnerable User Bill; and the Trails Bill (with some language modification); Updates to follow once session closes on May 8th, 2012.

OLD BUSINESS:

TRAIL SURFACE STUDY:

Ruth reported that she has been in contact with the following towns with regards to ascertaining the difference maintenance costs associated with each surface type that town uses. Middlebury, Newtown (Newtown Bridle Lands Assoc.), East Hampton (Airline Greenway), Hop River and Larkin Bridle Trail. She is still in the information gathering stage and will report at the next meeting with any updates.

2012 MEETING DATE CHANGES:

From June 12th to June 16th

From September 11th to September 13th

From December 11th to December 13th

2013:

March 14th

June 13th

September 12th

December 12th

NEW BUSINESS:

River Walk Trail - Windsor

EAC will issue a Thank You to all the associations that supported the River Walk Trail with a parallel trail to be a multi-use service to accommodate horseback riding. Ruth will issue a Thank you card to Vinnie Messino, Park Supervisor (Penwood State Park Address), and Mayor of Windsor, Don Trinks. With a CC: to; Tom Tyler – Director of State Parks, and Matt Fritz – Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (79 Elm Street)

Amy will also send and sign a separate card from the CHC-VHP members as well.

ADJOURNMENT:

7:25 PM. Motion by Diane, Leslie 2nd, and Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Judy Beliveau

Equine Advisory Council Member

See below attached report from Jan Collins

Report for 3/13/12 EAC meeting from Jan Collins

5. State Park and Forest Updates

Shenipsit State Forest - The Shenipsit Area finally has a new supervisor, Vinnie Messino. Since this is an additional Area for Vinnie along with Penwood, the Shenipsit Area has been moved from the Eastern District of the State into the Western District where Penwood is located and EP Operative Supervisor is Tammy Talbot. This now includes Shenipsit, Nipmuck, Nye Holman forests, Scantic River and Bigelow Hollow state parks, and Belding, Charter Marsh and Kollar WMA. The next time the VHP schedules a meeting with Tammy Talbot, Jan would like to be included to introduce herself and bring Tammy up to date on issues in this Area.

VHP members in Shenipsit SF report that thanks to a motorized Enduro event a couple weeks ago in the forest, many of the trails have been cleared and are in pretty good shape with the dry winter. Yellow-diamond marking of the trails will continue in the spring.

Scantic River SP - popular use of the Greenway along the Scantic River has resulted in most of the trail being cleared of storm debris by the users, now with the warmer weather, the emphasis is on the river itself, with the Watershed clearing debris for boat traffic.

Goodwin State Forest - Jan met with the Friends of Goodwin/Trail Committee on Feb. 28th to continue discussion of the CHC recommended multi-use route from the Natchaug SF Horse camp to Goodwin SF and back. A compromise was reached in which the Yellow-diamond markers of the CHC recommended route would NOT be physically placed in Goodwin but instead would end at the Goodwin/Natchaug boundary where a "welcome" kiosk and map holder would be installed with the suggested route identified on the map.

The reasoning was that almost all of the Goodwin trails are identified by color markings and any further markers might confuse people. Also, equestrians are not limited to the suggested route, except for just a couple equestrian unfriendly trails, all trails are open to horses. Therefore it was agreed to identify a suggested route by this summer, which would complete a 15 mile loop from Natchaug Silvermine Horse Camp.

Things to do:

1. Determine route (Jean Morrison, Susan Crawford, Meg Sauter, Jan Collins, etc)
2. CHC offered to pay for the welcome kiosks (1 and perhaps 2 depending on the route) and map holders at a cost of approximately \$200 a piece.
3. Laurie said DEEP could work with us to possibly identify the route on the Goodwin map with a small horse icon over the trail. Maps would then have to be made and copied for the map holders, put on the DEEP website, and kept supplied by the VHP folks in the area.
4. Goodwin trail committee also asked if the CHC grant money would cover the cost of replacing the maps with the new horse route ID in all 8 of their existing kiosks in case equestrians did not have a map and thus could look at the kiosk maps at strategic points around the forest. Cost of printing these large maps at Staples was approximately \$30 a piece.
5. The trail committee also approved the construction of a horse hitching rail across the road from the picnic pavilion. CHC needs to propose a design. Materials may be available on site.
6. Short term plan for the Goodwin Center (this summer) is to redesign the front entrance to the Center as well as making the parking area and entrance to the trails more convenient. Long term plan (when endowment money is released) is to create more parking especially for horse trailers.