

**Minutes of the
Equine Trails Subcommittee
March 12, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) was called to order by Chair Mike Foote on March 12, 2015 and held at the MSU Diagnostics Center, Room 115, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, MI 48910. All members were present: **Mike Foote, Janet Holmstrom, Gabrielle Hume, Dick Kleinhardt, Sarah Nicholls, and Kristie Walls**. The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: **Kriss Bennett, Earl Flegler, Barbara Graves, Dr. Christine Hanaburgh, Anna Sylvester, and Paul Yauk**.

Chair Foote asked members for approval of the January 21, 2015 meeting minutes. There were a few changes and edits mentioned for correction by members. Dick Kleinhardt made the motion for the approval of the minutes with the changes and Kristie Walls seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chair Foote asked to approve the agenda, Gabrielle Hume made the motion and Sarah Nicholls seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Chair Foote congratulated this year's Catalyst Award winners Dick and Connie Kleinhardt, and Anna Sylvester. The award is presented to those who have been instrumental and/or influential to the Michigan Horse Industry.

Business Items for Discussion

Kristie Walls - Central Lower Peninsula Report:

Fort Custer

- Kriss Bennett will research status of WIPs. Carport was completed on 11/17/15.
- Paul Yauk responded on status of antennae field – it is Federal land, not DNR.

Ionina

- WIP entered for electric sites in campground.
- Crossing for Sessions Creek scheduled for June/July – Kriss Bennett will remove WIP to move EQ campground.

Sleepy Hollow

- Replanking the bridge.
- Kriss will research EQ use on the CIS and provide a response.

Yankee Springs

- New Kiosk has been designed, budgeted, and sent to Joe Strach in Lansing for approval.
- Designing several confidence-building obstacles to be located in camp; the first one a bridge.
- Working with DEQ and DNR to facilitate adding 5 additional sites to existing equestrian campground, because the park is overflowing during special events -- to finish this summer.
- Actively developing layout of modern horse camp. Park manager is on board and approves the location. Electricity is already there. Actively seeking out user numbers from existing camps that provide modern amenities to support this request.

-Proposed trail miles from adjacent state land that may be closed to motor vehicles but left accessible to equestrians with commitment to maintain them. This proposal has already been sent for approval by the game area manager Sarah Schaefer.

Gabrielle Hume - Southeast Lower Peninsula Report:

- Has not heard from anyone about projects.
- She created the abbreviations list based on Kristie's request at the last meeting, which Barbara Graves handed out to everyone.
- Paul stated that Vector has officially withdrawn from the Highland Rec plan. They plan to partner with the E.T. Rover line that is next to the park.

Dick Kleinhardt – Northern Lower Peninsula Report:

- Because of the brutal winter, not much has happened.
- Big Oaks - received an email from Jinjyr Miller president of WHAM overseeing Big Oaks campground project. Right now the crews are cutting oak and doing trimback.
- There is a scheduled PRCEC meeting on the 24th of March at the Roscommon Field Office. Anna will be revealing, along with Brian Mastenbrook and Scott Whitcomb, the results of their comprehensive list of needs and wants in Pigeon.

Mike Foote - Southwest Lower Peninsula Report:

- Had a chance to talk to Bob Walker, and WIP is moving forward. It is vitally important to have a campground with electricity. He thinks it will make a big difference in the amount of equestrians that come to camp.
- Kristie - she has had a few people ask about cabins, but they are not available for equine rental. What would we need to do to get a yurt there? Kriss said it's about \$18,000 because of the materials and accessibility and it can be discussed with Shawn. Anna – platform tents and tepees used in some of the parks are less expensive.

Janet Holmstrom – Upper Peninsula Report:

- Working with DNR on a multi-use campground in Ontonagon County. There will be designated horse trails and an ATV area. Simar campground – no official word on this yet. Anna responded that Simar campground in Ontonagon County approved for EQ and ORV use.
- She is going to create a spreadsheet of Facebook page responses of likes and dislikes in campgrounds. When complete she will send it to everyone.
- Marquette campground has not yet been approved through the trail proposal database. A public hearing is recommended for this campground.
- Joan Duncan can work with Ron Yesney on trail proposals.
- Joan would like to ask that Janet be given \$5,000 for the signs that she will need by the campground on Courtney Lake. No motion or approval was made on this.

Sarah Nicholls – Tourism Representative:

- The State Tourism Conference is 3/22/15 – 3/24/15. One of the topics will be Tourism Strategic Plan (she handed out the Pure Michigan booklet), which is a five-year plan developed in 2012.

-Another presentation will be the publication of a Michigan Bicycle Tourism marketing plan. There is a Promotions Marketing committee and they are interested in helping promote various niche activities within Michigan. She thought it would be appropriate for her to take the lead on developing a marketing plan for equine tourism as well. She suggested first thing, put together a list of all the individuals and groups, and then come up with a date, time, and place for a meeting. Gabrielle, after receiving some names, could send an e-mail out to the groups. Action item: send Sarah a list of individuals.

Action Items

Courtney Lake/Simar Campground/Ontonagon County

It was suggested that the official approval letter go to the initial requester. Action item – Paul to report on review process and the timeline.

Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson) Program

Paul Yauk introduced Christine Hanaburgh, Ph.D., Federal Aid Coordinator from DNR, Wildlife Division. Dr. Hanaburgh was asked to do a general presentation of Pittman-Robertson funding and licensing fees. Members received a copy of the presentation via email on 3/24/15.

After the presentation, Gabrielle Hume cited sources on what other states allow on P-R/D-J lands for comparison and to keep the conversation going for these lands. Our goal for ETS is to expand the trail system, and all we've done so far is improve campgrounds. How do we find connections and how do we work with the bigger picture, which she thinks Parks and Recreation has dealt with, finding all the connectors between the existing places to make Michigan the Trails state and move forward to expand trails?

Elk Hill Letter

Chair Foote asked if there were any major typos we need to cover. Concerns expressed on whom would be eligible to rent the shelter. Anna replied it's really intended for the group campers, not for public use. Dick Kleinhardt made the motion to adopt the letter; Gabrielle Hume seconded, and the letter was approved unanimously. Chair Foote signed three copies and gave to Barbara Graves who subsequently mailed them.

State Trail Plan

Chair Foote said this will potentially take a little more time. His suggestion is to go ahead and get the next meeting lined-up. Corral definition will be put on hold as well.

Next Meeting Location

June 23, 2015, Doherty Hotel, Clare, MI. Lunch at 11:30 a.m.; meeting immediately follows lunch. Requires 12 to have lunch for free meeting space. Barbara Graves will cancel MSU Diagnostic Center for that date.

Public Comment

-Joan Duncan wants to encourage the ETS to refer to the original survey and the four goals that evolved from that survey. Her question is what new campgrounds and trails have been created by the ETS/DNR in the past six years in the U.P.? Anna responded:

- Campgrounds that were previously closed or not legally open to EQ that have been approved to open for EQ are: Headquarters Lake, Cedar River North, Brevort Lake (sites not yet developed), Simar (campground not yet designed)
- Campgrounds under proposal: Marquette
- Pending research for EQ use: Indian Lake State Park
- Kriss Bennett will research trails

-Trust Fund Grant - Kriss said as it is a 2011 trust fund grant that will expire in September. There was \$219,000 that was allocated to equestrian projects; \$138,000 has been spent. This current spreadsheet is what has been spent to date, and projects not started yet are not showing on it.

-Gabrielle asked if they got the \$3,000 at Sleepy Hollow. Small District project funds come from the District Manager via a request from the Park Supervisor. Partnership Match applications are due in the fall to Matt Lincoln; group can use labor as matching funds.

Chair Foote said both the review of the State Trail Plan and the definition and discussion of corral will be moved to the next meeting at the top of the agenda. If anyone has anything that they want added to the agenda, let him know ahead of time and he will add it. Other action items that we had are to send Sarah a list of individuals that we believe are going to fulfill the Equine Tourism Marketing Plan, and Paul to show progress on streamlining process for approvals.

Kriss will have the updated spreadsheet at the next meeting that Matt Lincoln was managing for the projects. Chair Foote will send additions to Kriss. Kriss will get their input to see if it's going to be useful or not.

Chair Foote motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sarah Nicholls moved the motion. Gabrielle Hume seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.