

**Minutes of the
Equine Trails Subcommittee
January 20, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) was called to order by Chair Foote on January 20, 2016 at 1:15 p.m. at the MSU Diagnostics Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. Members present were: **Chair Chair Foote Foote, Janet Holmstrom, Gabrielle Hume, Dick Kleinhardt, and Kristie Walls**. The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: **Kriss Bennett, Earl Flegler, Barbara Graves, Kirk Lapham, Tim Machowicz, Scott Pratt, and Paul Yauk**.

Action Items

Kristie Walls moved the motion to approve the November 12, 2015 meeting minutes. Dick Kleinhardt seconded and it carried unanimously.

Gabrielle Hume moved the motion to approve the revised January 20, 2016 agenda. Dick Kleinhardt seconded and it carried unanimously.

Trail Plan Spreadsheet – Chair Foote went through pages 89 – 92 of the plan and put it in table format with columns so that it lists the recommendations, goals, and has a blank column for updates. He and Paul Yauk will update it with recommendations from committee members. It will eventually be on the ETS web page. Items can be sent to Chair Foote at his equine-only e-mail address: draftyrider@gmail.com.

Paul Yauk emailed Steve DeBrabander the question regarding the Equestrian Trust Fund application – Is it possible to install a single recreation element at multiple locations, such as six vault toilets at six different sites? Steve responded that if PRD is the applicant and has site control of all of the sites then he thinks they can make it work. They would have to figure out how to make it work in MiRecGrants system, their county-by-county reporting and scoring but he thinks they could try it. He said the legislature would not like to see the word “various” in the county category but they could explain in the description exactly where these will be located.

MOTION: Gabrielle Hume made the motion to table the discussion of the Trail Plan Scorecard for the next meeting. All were in favor.

Trails Project List Update – Kriss Bennett will make changes based on their committee reports. She wanted to reiterate that when a WIP or a trail proposal gets approved, it does not necessarily mean it has funding. Some of the things on the list that were approved back in 2008 could be sitting on the list for future funding. She is going to add in the comment section where groups can apply for partnership grants.

Kristie Walls asked why the column for “estimated cost” is not filled in and how are they as a group supposed to know how to approach funding if there is no dollar amount. Kriss said that she will go through all of the WIPs and see if there is estimated cost information, but she is limited to the information she has within those databases.

Tim Machowicz added that a manager or park supervisor would not know the cost of a large project such as adding a campground and that that is why those would go through an approval

process and planning. Planners are the ones who have the expertise in determining value. A park supervisor can layout a new campground concept, which is addressing the need, but they do not have an idea of what it is going to cost. That is when engineers get involved and they give them project estimates. That is why they do not always put in a value, because they are not the experts.

Chair Foote asked if there was a way to categorize a project so they know if it is a small project or if it is a bigger project. Can some information be provided that give them an idea of how long it would take to go through the approval process or if it is something they can deal with right away; especially if it is where they can get matching funds? Tim said there are "small projects", "minor construction", and then "capital outlay" and its value, but he does not know the actual values. The higher up, the more hard figures are needed.

Chair Foote said there is no reason they cannot put that in the comments and say that dollar figure is going to be based on engineering studies and take whatever amount of time. Kriss said some of it was because they keep changing the way it looks. Once we are happy with how it looks, she can beef up the information.

Kristie has a concern with the fact that Eric Pudelko still does not have access to the database. Paul will get back to Kristie about the status of Eric's access.

Potential Connector Trails – Kristie did talk to all of her trail group presidents and the problem is that all of the parks are so dispersed from one another it would be 40 miles of connector trail. Paul Yauk said that PRD has mapped some connector trails already: Brighton to Lakelands, Lakelands to Pinckney, Pinckney to Waterloo, Island to Pontiac Lake.

Gabrielle said she thinks they also need to consider not just state parks, but connecting with county and maybe village parks. They are not necessarily talking about one park to another park. She hopes that they are all looking at the park system and the forest system, because if they do not, they are not gaining any traction and they are not going to be able to increase their trail knowledge. The whole goal of the committee is to increase the trails and make it so that when you drive five hours from out of state to come here, you have more than 10 miles of trails, because nobody is going to drive five hours for 10 miles of trail.

Chair Foote asked if it would be worthwhile to draft a generic letter from the ETS that the various committee members can send to their groups to have them pursue that information. He knows that the mapping thing is looking at it too and has been a huge asset. They could pass it out as an official letter from the ETS seeking input. He and Gabrielle will be in charge of the letter and will run it by the group for comment. Chair Foote will start the letter and send it to Gabrielle.

MOTION: Gabrielle made the motion to organize a letter to various groups regarding potential connector trails. Dick Kleinhardt supported and it carried unanimously.

Business Items for Discussion

Dick Kleinhardt – Northern Lower Peninsula Report:

- After a lengthy process which included two important meetings with the Pigeon River Advisory Council, they ended up with 17 new connectors out of the 24 that were asked for. Special thanks to Kerry Mase, Bonnie Cornelius, Darlene Alexander and Carol Clute who

worked on this special “connector committee.” The entire PRCEC is very grateful for all their hard work. They were scheduled to be presented to the NRC this past month and then a Land Use Order by the Director will be approved next month.

- As a result of additional trails being approved, there will be a lot of work that needs to be done in re-opening them. Back Country Horsemen will host a giant work bee tentatively scheduled for April 21-24th. Kelly Kinser, manager of Elk Hill Campgrounds, and Scott Thompson are compiling a to-do list for the group.

- After serving as the equestrian representative on the PRCAC for many years, Kerry Mase has been replaced by Chuck Fanslow. Chuck is vice chair of the Pigeon River Equestrian Committee and is the current president of MTRA and will do a wonderful job representing equestrians on this council. He thanks Kerry for her service and wishes Chuck the best as he steps up to serve. **The committee will send Kerry a thank you letter signed by Chair Foote; Barb will send Chair Foote the letter and he will print it off and sign.

-Big Oaks Campground was officially opened on October 1st. They are looking forward to riding and camping there this summer. This “equestrian only” campground will be a highlight for northern Michigan. The boost to tourism for the surrounding community will be welcomed.

Kristie Walls – Central Lower Peninsula Report:

- Ft. Custer – One project left on the list is a manure bunker that is scheduled for spring work. Working on a WIP right now for a new trail they would like this summer.

- Ionja – 15001 – still has no update on the five electric sites (Kriss Bennett informed Murdock and Eric that they need to reach out to the equestrian groups and layout what the plan is, but she has not heard back from them. Scott Pratt asked for Kriss to forward that to him as well, and he will do a follow-up). Per Sean Mulligan, projects 7002 and 6009 were supposed to be removed from the list because they were no longer needed.

- Sleepy Hollow – Marsha Putnam reported that last year they were very busy with the bridge project and reopening the trails on the island for multi-use. They finished the PMP project with the DNR on the rustic cabin. This year they are looking at re-opening North Ridge Trail and re-planking the bridge, or possibly putting in a culvert; Sleepy Hollow Trail Riders are going to totally fund this. They have raised money for trail projects and regravelling low areas on the east loop that needed attention. A member has purchased a unique gravel hauler at his cost and they are going to experiment with using it instead of ATVs and wagons that cause more trail damage. This is another gift to the state. They hope the WIP 12003 for North Ridge Trail gets all the way through.

- Yankee Springs – They built a kiosk last year that had gone through a design approval process with the park system and it looks great. It includes a bench with a roof and shelter with a whiteboard, chalkboard, and boxes for site payments. They also did a group-sized fire ring. There is a meeting today with the park supervisor to discuss the management plan and the plans that Yankee Springs Trail Riders Association has.

Gabrielle Hume – Southeast Lower Peninsula Report:

- Brighton – BRA07003 – toilets were fixed and skylights installed. BRA14001 – no status. BRA15002 – she thinks this was completed in 2014.

- Highland - HGH15002 – Caryn Robinson said the organization is currently going through trying to show use in their campground and they have some trail repairs scheduled. They did a large one that she believes cost \$3,000 for gravel, which is complete. She said HGH07001 was completed last year.

- Maybury – Nothing to report.

- Ortonville – Has not received a response from them, but she believes the items on the list have been on there a long time.

- Pontiac Lake – She thinks the Pontiac Lake group work very well with the park manager, and hopefully those projects will move forward.
- Proud Lake – Nothing to report.
- Waterloo – The two items on list are very old. There is nothing the horse people can do on any of these items. The trail addition that Waterloo has asked for is for the children's loop; they are working on it and she does not know if there is any cost to the state for that.
- Pinckney – She thinks those are complete. There was quite a bit of money spent at Pinckney.

Janet Holmstrom – Upper Peninsula Report:

- Joan Duncan reported that the Lake Superior Campground in Marquette County has been approved, per Rob Katona. She had proposed a new multi-use parking lot there before she knew the campground was approved. Now she is much more encouraged about that and so if a campground gets approved, then she guesses the DNR will be offering some money to help get it started. The parking lot is not on the list but is in the loop. The only thing that has occurred is that her and some people have already begun to GPS some horse trails in the woods. She has about two miles done, and that location has a rail trail all ready for people who, for instance, have gated horses that would like to get out and stretch their legs and let them go; they could go about 60 miles in either direction and the footing is all nice sand. Then there is also another little road that is there right now that is directly off M-28. If it is approved, people could begin using it just as quick as a parking lot is put in there.
- Simar campground – Joan said that Janet spoke to Bill Doan and nothing had been done with it.

Updates and Announcements

- March and November Meeting Date Changes – Discussion was to move the March meeting to March 9 at 1:15 p.m. in Lansing and move the November meeting to October 19, 2016 in Clare at 1:15 p.m.

MOTION: Dick Kleinhardt moved the motion to move the March meeting to March 9, 2016. Gabrielle Hume seconded and it carried unanimously.

MOTION: Dick Kleinhardt moved the motion to change the November meeting to October 19, 2016 in Clare, Michigan at 1:15 p.m. Gabrielle Hume seconded and it carried unanimously.

Equine Campgrounds Update – Kriss Bennett reported that at the November 12 ETS meeting, the ETS gave the recommendation to Parks and Recreation to create equestrian only campgrounds. Kristie Walls replied that that was not what the motion was in last month's minutes. They moved to keep the separation of non-equestrians from equestrians in park campgrounds. Barb Graves asked if the minutes are wrong and Kristie said the minutes are correct, but the letter is saying something that they did not. They did not ask to create equestrian only campgrounds. That is part of the request. The request is specifically to keep the separation of non-equestrians from equestrians in state park campgrounds. Paul Yauk asked then if the first sentence is correct but the next sentence is wrong. Kristie replied, yes.

After lengthy discussion on clarification, it was decided to table the discussion for the next meeting when questions can be asked directly to Anna Sylvester who was not in attendance today. Scott Pratt, Chief of Southern Field Operations asked that they copy him on them as well, at pratts@michigan.gov. Scott said this letter has only gone to the ETS and it is what

came out of the survey to the managers, and now it is time to go back to the drawing board and figure out what and where we need to tweak and what we need to change.

Kristie said she thinks the most serious consideration is the first paragraph, and if this is going to be based on what came out of the last ETS meeting, it needs to be much more closely tied to the version in the minutes. Kristie said that it also raises some flags about calling them “equestrian camps” versus “horse camps”. Chair Foote said they have had this discussion before. There is a lot of terms that are thrown out there; a lot of acronyms that people are not used to. Right now we have equestrians.

Caryn Robinson stated they would like to let everyone know that Pontiac Lake was thrilled that it said they were recommended as equestrian only and she is sure the other two are happy about that so leave that in the memo and don't change it.

Liability Update – Kirk Lapham – Chair Foote introduced Kirk Lapham from Legislative and Legal Affairs, DNR. Chair Foote pointed out that this is not regarding liability in the horse camp with what they were just discussing and that Kirk gave the talk on liability for trails to the MTAC group for snowmobiles, ORV, equestrians, bicycles, hikers, etc.

Kirk gave a brief presentation to the committee on the interpreted statute Recreational Land Use Act (RUA). (Presentation attached).

Kirk stated that the DNR's Legislative and Legal Affairs staff met with the sponsor of HB 4244, Representative Pettalia, last October 2015 to discuss the amendment that is needed to address the issue that was caused by the *Duffy* opinion. The Representative was receptive to the change at that time. The next step is to have the amendment made and introduced to the Senate Committee on Judiciary. Kirk will update committee members on the status of HB 4244.

Kirk said you have groups that are working on a trail that may or may not be associated with equestrians. They are the ones that, under the *Duffy* interpretation, are potentially exposed to greater liability than before the *Duffy* opinion. They are working on this statutory change and will address the issue across the board. The DNR recognizes all of the valid concerns and that is why they are moving in the direction that they are.

Gabrielle asked if Scott Pratt could check with Jason Fleming and see if there is a specific Adopt-A-Trail program v. Adopt-A-Park. She knows currently Yankee Springs and Back Country have an Adopt-A-Park and she thinks that Yankee Springs is going to be signing an MOU, but she is curious as to whether there is a separate and distinct Adopt-A-Trail program within Jason's domain. Scott Pratt will check.

Kriss said she is aware that Miguel Rodriguez is trying to make sure their friends' agreements, as they get signed, meet that volunteers from the friends groups get treated like they are state employees. Until all of their friends groups are under that agreement, they are kind of in a gray area until they get this amendment.

State Game Areas - Earl Flegler said the press release that went out stated that they are in the master plan review process and to submit comments on 8 state game areas (press release attached). Chair Foote wanted to make sure everyone received the information and to

encourage any of the people that may use those areas to go in and look at them. Gabrielle will send it out to all of the ex-members.

Public Comment

Marsha Putnam said as a member of several different equestrian groups and camping in different campgrounds across the state, she really feels that the increase revenue from a mixed group campground does not justify mixing the groups. She strongly urges the committee to consider keeping equestrian campgrounds equestrian campgrounds only.

Dick Kleinhardt stated that when people make the effort and the expense to go camping, whether it is with horses, bikes, kids, or a dog, when you mix them, in particular the equestrian activities, the experience for each one of the campers is compromised. They had an accident at an event at Elk Hill, and at the event they had to keep telling people to please not throw a Frisbee with their dog because the horses were "wiggling out". When equestrians camp together, whether they have known each other long or not, they always look out for one another. You can go get groceries and they will watch your horses for you. With non-equestrians, you have to worry about leaving your horses.

Joan Duncan says she is the only person that disagrees with that. At Headquarters Lake she and her other party who had two horses were the only people there. There were eight other camp areas sitting there empty (there is going to be an expanded section up a little farther that is in the works). Even though it has already been designated as an equine campground and everybody knows it, there is no reason to enforce the law if everyone is getting along. She thinks that there is space in here for some education to take place with equine owners and maybe ATV'ers. She does not think we should automatically assume that everybody is an idiot if they do not have a horse. Dick and Gabrielle believe it is a different culture in the U.P. from downstate.

See attached for more public comment

Chair Foote went over action items:

- Letter to Kerry Mase
- Paul to check on access to project database
- Chair Foote to update table with proposed changes
- Paul to contact the NRC to see when the Elk Hill connection trail was going to be on agenda
- Chair Foote to compose letter to communities and horse groups to see what connector trails might be available.

Dick Kleinhardt moved the motion to adjourn. Kristie Walls seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Equine Trails Subcommittee Meeting

Land Use Liability

Kirk Lapham, Legal Policy Analyst
Legislative and Legal Affairs Office

January 20, 2016



Relevant Statutes & Case Law

- Recreational Land Use Act (RUA), MCL 324.73301
- *Kruse v Iron Range Snowmobile Club*, 890 F Supp 681 (WD Mich, 1995)
- *Duffy v Irons Area Tourist Ass'n*, 300 Mich App 542 (2013)



RUA, MCL 324.73301(1)

- Prohibits a cause of action for injuries resulting from recreational use or trail use, with or without permission, “against the owner, tenant, or lessee of the land unless the injuries were caused by the gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct of the owner, tenant, or lessee.”



Kruse v Iron Range Snowmobile Club (1995)

- Federal District Court held that the RUA applied to an entity that contractually agreed to maintain a trail even if the entity did not own or lease the land
- The DNR and trail groups have operated under the *Kruse* interpretation since 1995



Duffy v Irons Area Tourist Ass'n (2013)

- Michigan Court of Appeals rejected *Kruse*
 - State courts are not required to apply federal court decisions when applying state law
- *Duffy* Court narrowly interpreted “owner, tenant, or lessee” as used in the RUA to exclude entities that contract to maintain trails on land that the entity does not own or lease



Result of *Duffy* Opinion

- Only landowners, tenants, and lessees are protected by the RUA
- An entity without an ownership interest in the land on which the trail is located is not protected by the RUA



Response to *Duffy* Opinion

- An amendment to the RUA is necessary to expressly extend protection granted to landowners, tenants, and lessees to entities that maintain trails on property that the entity does not own or lease



Update

- The Legislature is currently considering an unrelated change to the RUA (HB 4244)
 - Representative Pettalia-Primary Bill Sponsor
- DNR's Legislative and Legal Affairs staff met with the Bill Sponsor in October 2015 to discuss the proposed language



Update

- HB 4244 had already passed the House
- Bill is currently assigned to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
 - DNR requested a change from the Senate Policy Staff to amend the Bill



Next Steps

- Amendment to HB 4244 must be introduced in the Senate Committee on Judiciary



Thank You

- Questions?



1/18/2016

Gmail - Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting

Gmail
by Google

*Fort
Custer
Horse
Friends
Assoc. President
Ionia
board member*

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting

nkshorselady@yahoo.com <nkshorselady@yahoo.com>

Sat, Jan 16, 2016 at 10:55 AM

To: Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

I am strongly against making the equine campground at Ionia multi-use.

It would create many stressed campers and animals as all would be worried about safety of all in the campground.

Nancy Simmonds

Sent from Windows Mail

From: Kristie Walls

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2016 9:30 AM

1/18/2016

Gmail - Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting



*Ionia
board*

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting

Chris and Frank Osmolinaki <cfosmolinski@gmail.com>

Sat, Jan 16, 2016 at 3:14 PM

Cc: Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

I enjoy the Ionia campground for horses because it is for horses. I feel much safer with people around me that have horses and know what they can do. Please don't make Ionia multi- use. Chris Osmolinaki
[Quoted text hidden]

1/18/2016

Gmail - Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting



*lonnie
board*

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting

Ingrid Humphreys <ingridjoyhumphreys@gmail.com>

Sat, Jan 16, 2016 at 3:24 PM

To: ...
Cc: ... , Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Horse campgrounds /trail are safe the way they are used now (not multi used) -users are bonded by the passion of horses/nature-they know how to look out for each other and understand the flight instinct horses are possessed with which lead to greater safety standards/mutual respect for noise/quick movement/ loud sounds,etc...that the average non horse trail user would not understand or facilitate when using trails. I truly believe in designated trail for the equine enthusiast-for the safety of all trail users.

Ingrid Humphreys
ingridiovhumphreys@gmail.com

[Quoted text hidden]

1/19/2016

Gmail - Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting



*long
board*

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting

Maggie VanDyken <m7vandyken@hotmail.com>

Sun, Jan 17, 2016 at 6:44 PM

To: Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

I am against multi-use camping. I'm not sure if it was Silver Creek campground that is mixed use. People camping area is next to horse camping area with group camping on the other side (horse camping area is in the middle). We had a male adult from group camping who was very insistent that we give children in his group horse rides and 3 women who had been drinking from the people camping area walk over and want to pet our horses. Needless to say it was not a relaxing weekend and I have never gone back there.

Maggie

[Quoted text hidden]

1/19/2016

Gmail - Ionia Horse Camp - Shared with non-horse campers?



*Ionia
board*

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Ionia Horse Camp - Shared with non-horse campers?

Greg Skeide <vulcan1130@gmail.com>
To: Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 19, 2016 at 12:22 PM

I think it would be better to stay horse camping because some of the non horse people camping there won't have the same respect for the horses and riders. And I think it would tie up spots for the people who would want to bring in horses to camp. Thanks

[Quoted text hidden]

1/19/2016

Gmail - Re: Ionia Horse Camp - Shared with non-horse campers?



ionia board

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Re: Ionia Horse Camp - Shared with non-horse campers?

Susan Manes <sdmanes@yahoo.com>
To: Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 19, 2016 at 2:45 PM

I am against mixed usage. To many things can happen. Not a safe mix.

On Jan 19, 2016 12:11 PM, Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

I have not heard back from you regarding the horse camp at Ionia potentially being opened up to non-horse camping (called Mixed Use).

Normally, horse campers and their invited guests (horse savvy friends) are the only ones allowed to camp in this campground.

Are you ok with a potential change to "anyone can camp there"?

If not, I need to hear back from you in an email so I can print it and bring it with me to the ETS meeting tomorrow. IF you want to write such an email, please go back to the email I sent "Material for next Wednesday. . ." and review page 15 and 16 of the attachment. Your email will be most effective if it speaks to the list of criteria allowed to use for the campground decision - per PRD.

Thank you,

Kristie

Yankee
BCHM
IONIA

I would not support the Ionia Equestrian camp ground, or any equestrian camp ground to be considered for mixed users. My first and most important reason is safety to all persons, horses and property. No one can place a value on a life, dramatically changed or even lost due to an unforeseen accident with an individual unfamiliar with a horse. Secondly, it will be a diminished experience for both equestrian and other user. We typically attend the camp to relax and enjoy the public camps with other users that enjoy the same recreation. Thirdly the mixing of non-equestrians with equestrians would be a liability nightmare, leading to lower use numbers for the camp. Please do not consider any mixed user camps with equestrians, the camp fees are not worth the risk.

Ronald Walker, President, Yankee Springs Trail Riders Assoc.

Board member of, Ionia Horse Trails Assoc.

Director of the, Back Country Horseman of Michigan- Pigeon River and Beyond



Waterloo Horsemen's Assoc. President Ionia member

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Material for next Wednesday ETS Meeting

clsimpson75 <clsimpson75@yahoo.com>

Sat, Jan 16, 2016 at 4:07 PM

To: Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Horsecamps were created for horse enthusiasts and understand the risks of this type of animal. Can you imagine if a non equestrian wanted to pet the pretty horsey while horse owner is in camper or not present at the site. What if non equestrian wants to start a game of frisbee or the new fad, fly his helicopter. Sure, DNR can make all the rules necessary but Ive never seen a teenager and most adults read them. It will be to late just cause some non equestrian approachs a horse from behind and gets their teeth knocked out out worse yet, dead. These are not atvs or snowmobiles or bikes you can tum on and off or lean up against a tree. This is a species with a mind of its own and it takes an equestrian who understands their emotions. The Horse Campgrounds were made with that in mind. Just like on the trail, equestrians and some other user groups are not compatible. Do Not put them, us, and and our animals at risk for the sake of a few extra dollars.

Happy Connecting. Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S@ 5

Original message [Quoted text hidden]



Sleepy Hollow Trail Riders Assoc. President

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Ionia Campground Concerns

marken68@aol.com <marken68@aol.com>
To: kristie.walls@gmail.com

Sat, Jan 16, 2016 at 5:27 PM

To ETS,

It has come to my attention that the future use of the Ionia Equestrian Campground once again is in jeopardy. This area was left to the State for equestrian use- field trial or trail riding. It is a centrally located, beautiful big wooded area w/ equestrian mileage that other equestrian areas envy.

To consider mixing non equestrian users with equestrian users is not intelligent forethought. The liability issues the State assumes by knowingly mixing unfamiliar user groups is not wise. What potential revenue increase is worth the known bodily risk, unhappy campers and becoming an undesirable location to camp?

Equestrian campers w/ horses on pickett lines, in temporary fenced areas and perhaps panels someday, need to know their horses are safe in that area and surrounding space to rest, eat and not be stressed. Even well intending visitors to your campsite are watched for all well-being. Unsupervised speeding bikes, snooping dogs, screaming kids and whatever else can all pose threats.

Poop happens and the most conscientious poop picker uppers aren't always about. Tacking up, just starting out, while riding to the trail or around camp poop always happens. I don't think non horse folks are poop tolerant and when in an equestrian camp, it's there.

The 2014 Equestrian Trail Workshop at Pontiac Lake sponsored by MHC (attended by many DNR personnel) did it not raise what equestrian camping needs are? Gabrelle Hume had CD's made to highlight this informative session. Maybe this needs to be reviewed.

What is the criteria for choosing this particular campground for mixed use? Is it the whole equestrian area or a loop or selected sites? Is it for the entire camping season or a select season?

January 16,2016

Marsha Putnam

1/18/2016

Gmail - Non-campers in equestrian camp ground



*Yankee
Springs
board
lonia
member*

Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Non-campers in equestrian camp ground

Kathlyn Taylor <taylorkl@tds.net>

Mon, Jan 18, 2016 at 7:15 AM

To: Kristie Walls <kristie.walls@gmail.com>

Yes, I agree! Mixed use camping greatly diminishes the enjoyment of all campers. The rules change for non-horse campers camping with horses. Their running, riding bikes, throwing, playing loudly would never be restricted and would scare the horses. The horse camper would have to be hyper diligent to be sure no one presents an unsafe situation to their horses. No one wants to go camping to spend the time worrying about unsafe behavior of their neighbor.

I feel very strongly that making ALREADY DESIGNATED EQUESTRIAN ONLY campground at Ionia or anywhere a mixed use campground will result in less horse trail use, less horse camping at the park, and potentially a loss of opportunity for equestrians to camp.

Kathy Taylor

Memo

To Mike Foote (chair) and the ETS Committee members, Bill Mortiz (DNR), Paul Yauk (DNR), Matt Lincoln (DNR)

From Sandra S. Batie, former chair of the ETS

January 19, 2016

RE: Sharing Equine Campgrounds with nonequine campers

I would appreciate having this memo read and then included in the minutes of meeting of the ETS.

I have been made aware that the DNR is contemplating the sharing of equine campgrounds with non-equine campers in the summer camping months. I want to express my strong opposition. The sharing poses a strong possibility of accidents and raises serious liability issues. There are two types of unpredictable "actors"—the horses and the non-equine campers. Let me explain.

Horses are unpredictable. For example, inexperienced, young horses may be quite concerned if approached by people who do not understand them. Horses have blind spots right behind them and directly in front of their noses. They may kick if someone approaches from the rear or aggressively from the front. Loud noises or waving objects might produce a flight or a fight response. Horses may not like being petted, hugged, or approached by bikes, trikes, or unfamiliar objects that may be carried by a non-equine person. I personally have witnessed unsupervised children from non equine campgrounds enter the equine campground and try to approach a horse—sometimes biking, running, and yelling at them. (Think about a 4 year little girl running at a horse yelling horsy horsy) Most children mean no harm, but could easily get hurt. Scared horses can break free and run around the campground and recreation area. Even calm horses might step on someone's foot. Since horses weigh over 1000 pounds, the result is frequently a broken foot.

Non-equine adult campers, their children, and their pets are unpredictable. Most non-equine campers do not know how to behave around horses. Many non-equine campers do not seem to think there is any reason they cannot walk on a site already occupied by horses. Children in particular do not respect boundaries. Some dogs accompanying nonequine campers will threaten horses, who will defend themselves, particularly if the horses are tied. (Imagine a child yelling at and trying to control a dog who is attacking a horse who is defending itself.)

Adults too—either either because of ignorance of horses or impaired judgment-- can engage in actions near horses that are potentially dangerous.

ETS has worked hard to develop good relationships with the DNR and with the general public. It has strived to preserve and protect recreation areas and parks that include equine recreation. Horse associations and clubs have put countless hours into park and recreation improvements. Their hard work is predicated on the assumption that the equine campground will remain for equines.

I also suggest that because the DNR is not thinking of opening non-equine campgrounds to equines, there is a serious issue of parity with this suggestion of sharing. I think that if administrators or the legislator suggested the sharing of non-equine campgrounds, the arguments against would include recognition of the dangerous nature of what is being proposed. Some types of recreation users should be separated.