



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 11, 2013
RESUBMITTED: March 18, 2013

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Order to Regulate Use of Designated Portions of State Game Areas Regarding
Horses and Pack Animals
Land Use Orders of the Director Amendment No. 8 of 2013

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director to issue orders to implement land use rules.

Discussion and Background:

Horseback riding has been a popular public recreational activity within the Allegan State Game Area (SGA) for many years. The Allegan County Equestrian Trail System (ETS) was established to make the area more accessible for equestrian use and to protect sensitive ecosystems. The ETS is comprised of over 50 miles of marked and mapped designated riding trails created through a collaborative agreement between Allegan County Parks, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Friends of the Allegan County Equestrian Trail System (FACETS). Allegan County Parks maintains and manages the trail through a 25-year renewable lease agreement with the State of Michigan. This unique relationship is possible, because the ETS was specifically re-routed to ensure there are no fee-restricted lands as part of the trail system.

In the interest of public safety and to ensure a positive hunting experience, the ETS is annually closed during firearm deer season. This rule was previously in effect as part of a closure to Allegan SGA special-use areas. Although with the creation of the trail system, the SGA no longer has special-use areas. Accordingly, the Department is updating the order language to be specific to the trail which keeps the closure in alignment with the use agreement under Allegan County Parks.

This proposed amendment is simply technical language to more accurately reference the trail and does not change current use.

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Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information on March 14, 2013, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's February 2013 calendar and may be eligible for approval on April 11, 2013.



Bill O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division



Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division



James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division



William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

LAND USE ORDERS OF THE DIRECTOR

Amendment No. 8 of 2013

By authority conferred on the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by Section 504 of the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.504, and in accordance with R 299.921 to R 299.933 , the Director of the Department of Natural Resources orders the following:

3.17 Designated portions of state game areas, horses and pack animals prohibited at certain times.

Order 3.17 A person shall not possess a horse or other riding, driving, or pack animal within the following southern Michigan SGAs during the dates specified:

- (1) On the designated horseback riding trail in the Barry SGA, Barry county, from October 1 through January 1.
- (2) On the designated equestrian trail system in the Allegan SGA, Allegan county, from November 15 through November 30.

This amended order shall be posted on or after 12 day of April, 2013.

Issued on this 11th day of April 2013.

Keith Creagh
Director