



EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Location: RAM Center, Roscommon MI

March 9, 2022

1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Welcome – Roll Call

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS):

- Amy Scharmen-Burgdorf, Chairperson
- Jenny Cook
- Dug Jordan (absent)
- Kristie Walls
- Karen Bahrman
- ETS Tourism (vacant)

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

- Kristen Bennett, Annalisa Centofanti, Scott Slavin, Ron Yesney, Scott Pratt, Nikki Van Bloem, Paige Perry, Ron Yesney, Michelle O’Kelly, Elissa Buck, Nicole Hunt, Greg Kinser, Dakota Hewlett, Kasey Mahoney, Rich Hill, Rick-James Hill, Kristen Matson, Earl Flegler

OTHERS: Anna Lee, Joan Mulder, Jason Aric Jones

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 1:02 p.m.

Motion was made to approve Sept. 22, 2021 draft meetings minutes. Jenny Cook and Kristie Walls approved, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made to take agenda items out of order and approve the March 9 modified agenda. Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf requested to move Thunder Valley Logging in section VIII, from item c to item a, agenda item Shoreline Update in section XI, item f moved to section VIII, item h and move Trail Master Course in section VIII from item h to item i. Kristie Walls and Jenny Cook approved, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

THUNDER VALLEY LOGGING

Ms. Joan Mulder spoke about Thunder Valley Equestrian Trails, a small network of 8.8 miles of horse trails in Marquette County (Upper Peninsula). Ms. Mulder identified the trail system as a mess due to forestry logging. Joan said the trail system used to be wooded and beautiful but is now a mess and users no longer want to ride in this clear-cut area. Posted signs are falling down from rotting and volunteers have given up trying to maintain these trails. Poplar trees have started to sprout in the cleared areas making it difficult to keep trails clear and maintained.

Kristen Matson, from Forestry, responded by outlining the compartment review process and forest management. Kristen mentioned state forest lands are managed for logging whether or not there are trails on the land. Trails are considered during logging, but timber harvesting is the focus. In the compartment review process, foresters go out and review the compartment to determine which compartments will be inventoried. Thunder Valley area has 2 compartments for inventory. One of the compartments will be inventoried every time there is a year ending in 6 and the second compartment will be inventoried every time a year ends in 9. Forestry will start the review process 2 years prior to the harvest date. In 2024, the area ending in year 6 will be reviewed to determine if any further logging will be needed. Part of the compartment process is to ask the public to provide input at compartment review meetings with Forestry. All DNR divisions are involved in this decision-making process. Kristen did mention that the public did contact Forestry with positive feedback about the logging along 553.

Rick Hill from Forestry added that he was involved in this harvest plan and the motivation of why. Rick said smaller clear cuts were targeted due to disease issues and the Aspen trees near the trail head was pushing 50 years old, and natural mortality was near. Rick tried to maintain trail corridors to minimize disturbance of Thunder Valley Trail system. Red pine will be planted and is not susceptible to disease and more adapt to the area. Kristen mentioned staff have been cognizant of posting logging signs at trail heads to forewarn riders. Rob Katona, DNR, said the

foresters have done an exceptional job in keeping the trail in place, sighting a lot of extra care and attention has gone into trail retention. Kristen said typically a logging contract will last 3-4 years, with the majority of contracts completed in 2 years. Rob said DNR has switched over to Carsonite posts and is working with "Wendy" from the friends group replacing signs and posts. Rob did mention due to limited help, it has been taking longer to get them replaced. Compartment reviews are listed on Michigan.Gov webpage under PUBLIC INPUT sign up for DNR newsletters to receive these notifications.

ETS COMMITTEE REPORTS

Karen Bahrman – Upper Peninsula
See attached report.

In response to Karen's report, Nikki Van Bloem, DNR, presented a list of seven trails received from ETS to be designated for horse trails and closed to bikes (see attached). The list does not assume there may not be additional requests in the future. Nikki asked if the ETS committee agrees to this list. Kristen Bennett, DNR, added this list makes a good starting point. Nicole Hunt, DNR, stated through DNR/PRD an internal designation can be made through a Land Use Order of the Director (LUOD) from the Director to allow or not allow certain things or specific land use. This method will have the full effect of the law because legislation authorizes the Directors LUOD and it is recognized as law. All division Chiefs will have to sign off on a LUOD request. Kristie Walls made a motion to move forward with the presented list of seven trails and designate the Director to approve a LUOD. Jenny seconded the motion, with all in favor. Motion carried. Keep in mind certain areas, like county roads and private owned property will not be subject to a Directors LUOD, only state lands under management.

Kristie Walls – Central Lower Peninsula

No regional report submitted, as there is not much going on. Kristie did submit a volunteer hours report (see attached).

Jenny Cook – Southwestern Lower Peninsula

See attached reports. Reach out to Jenny Cook if you want a copy of her Trails Safe Passing Plan.

Jenny Cook referenced a portion of PRD State Land Rule, R299.927(1), reads as follows.

R299.927(1); Ride or allow a horse or other pack and saddle animal in any area, except for a designated equestrian trail or equestrian campground, or when in compliance with a permit issued for a field dog trial.

Nicole Hunt, DNR, clarified that the above Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) admin rule says horses are not allowed on PRD and State Game Areas (SGA) that have not been designated by PRD and SGA land use orders (they are allowed on forest land). This admin language is reflection of what is already in the statute, and this compliments legislation. This is why DNR is currently working through the process of designating equestrian trails on PRD and SGA.

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Provided equestrian campgrounds report from the USDA. Contact Amy-Scharmen-Burgdolf if you want a copy.

BRIDLE TAG LAWS

Karen Bahrman has been looking into bridle tag laws, researching what other states are doing. Minnesota has shown to be the most positive, effective program. Anna Lee, MSU student, conducted a survey and reported 80% of respondents said they would be willing to support a bridle tag (out of 330 respondents). Anna Lee added reported results from the same survey regarding a trail user fee for all nonmotorized users, with 64% in support. Further research and study will take place and will be reported back to these meetings. Nicole Hunt added in legislation a few years back a fee was proposed for non-motorized vessels, such as kayaks. That proposal did not move forward and had a lot of opposition.

MTRA PROJECT UPDATES

Mayhem Swamp

Scott Slavin, DNR, shared a map of Mayhem Swamp. A portion of the Shore-to-Shore trail crosses through private land which has recently been sold. The new landowner has denied access on this piece of property. No agreement can be reached with the new landowner at this time. Over the years Scott has worked with Michigan Trail Riders Association (MTRA) and Dug Jordan in this region for Shore-to-Shore trails. DNR is seeking an alternate route and has looked at several other areas. Scott asked the ETS committee to put him in touch with an MTRA representative in Dug Jordan's absence.

Cheboygan Camp

Rich Hill, DNR, said due to a loss of a lease there is a gap created in the Shore-to-Shore Trail in Cheboygan. DNR staff used criteria from MTRA and set sights on purchasing property within the city of Cheboygan, a little over 16 acres. The city is in favor of a campground within this area. DNR feels this has potential and is doable. The state acquired a sub-divided 5-acre portion through a public auction and is now in negotiation with the city to acquire the remaining 11 acres of property. With the campground being located within the city district, this will create a unique experience. Funding has already been identified for next steps once all property is acquired.

Goosecreek Stairs

Greg Kinser, DNR, is working with DNR staff, local planners, and local friends group in determining needs. This project has a design in place and are working on implementing next steps. There have been some roadblocks with limited staffing and construction commitments. Overall, the plan is to widen the steps. Greg will continue to provide updates as the project moves forward. The goal is to have a timeline in place this year and see progress. Greg will alert ETS when trail closures will happen.

CAPITAL OUTLAY 2022

Scott Pratt, DNR, provided an update regarding the 2022 Capital Outlay equestrian projects. Scott confirmed that the Cheboygan Campground and Goosecreek stairs are in his hopper and will

move forward once funding is identified. Scott is waiting on internal coding before he can confirm funding allotted for the overall 2022 Capital Outlay list.

Projects on the list that have been received from internal solicitation.

- Pontiac Lake Teggerdine staging area
- Brighton State Park equestrian campground and staging upgrades
- Yankee Springs equine upgrades; gravel, picnic tables, hitching rails, vault toilets
- Bass River upgrade to staging area and trail signage
- Garey Lake in Cadillac district replace well and vault toilet
- Tin Cup campground development funding
- Hopkins Creek road improvement
- Various equestrian camps in the Cadillac district – allocating funds for upkeep
- Gaylord district Elk Hill manure bunkers, backstops
- Big Oaks picnic tables, buddy sites, mounting blocks, picket posts
- Black Mountain Trail campfire rings, bunker tools
- Rockport parking lot, staging area, picnic tables
- Chippewa Hill pathway parking lot, staging area, picnic area
- Goosecreek facilities upgrades

Scott Pratt will have a more definitive direction over the next couple weeks.

DONATION PAGE DESIGNATIONS

Karen Bahrman commented on her experience with the DNR donation page that was set up a few months back. Karen asked if the page could be set up like a crowd funding, saying one donation will inspire another. Additionally, displaying a running tally of the user group or a project provides a challenging incentive. Karen said it is important to receive a receipt which reflects where the money was directed towards, the receipt from her donation states, “thank you for your donation” and does not reflect a designated trail use or project. Michelle O’Kelly, DNR, reported the donation page now has changed to reflect user type of donation. Michelle said the donation page can be modified to show monetary goals. DNR is working on a proposed timeline with a press release during National Trails day in June, following up in September during Trails week revealing how much each trail use received and an associated project. This same concept will be implemented for all trail usage.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLANS ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

Kristen Bennett, DNR, reported DNR has received a list from legislation, and it has not been made public yet. Internally, a special committee has been designated to vet out the projects identified can use this funding. The committee is determining a tier 1 round for projects that will make it through initially. The committee will continue to vet projects based on tier values. The Governor did specify these funds are for state park lands so trails on FRD lands are not included in the list.

SHORELINE UPDATE

Kasey Mahoney, DNR, provided an update on the proposed Silver Lake Sand Dunes seasonal shoreline ride. Kasey said DNR is working on getting a land use order in place to make this a seasonal opportunity, Nov. 1 – Nov. 30 will be the designated timeframe. The DNR recognizes how popular this activity is and are planning for the best outcome. Discussions are happening reading utilizing a reservation system. Kasey hopes to have all the pieces in place later this summer, with a final plan for the shoreline ride in the fall.

MTAC APPOINTMENT UPDATE

Kristen Bennett reported a reply was received from the Governor's office and they are not moving forward with ETS recommended appointment.

Nikki Van Bloem, DNR, introduced a new title for the ETS Tourism Rep stating this position is difficult to find someone with tourism credentials. Nikki would like to replace the tourism rep to read ETS Industry Rep. Nikki asked the committee members whose terms are expiring or expired what their desires are to continue on the board.

- Jenny Cook would like to stay another term
- Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf would like to stay another term
- Kristie Walls will stay on through Nov 2022

DNR Q1 2022 STAFF UPDATES written reports provided to subcommittee members.

2022 MEETING DATES

May 18; Aug. 10; Oct. 26 – Locations TBD

ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING COMMENTS

Jenny Cook inquired about the safety etiquette language on the DNR "Courtesy on the Trail" web page. Nikki Van Bloem clarified the language covers all nonmotorized trail users. Jenny wants to make sure the same equine trail message is conveyed and promoted across all boards, utilizing the same yielding pattern.

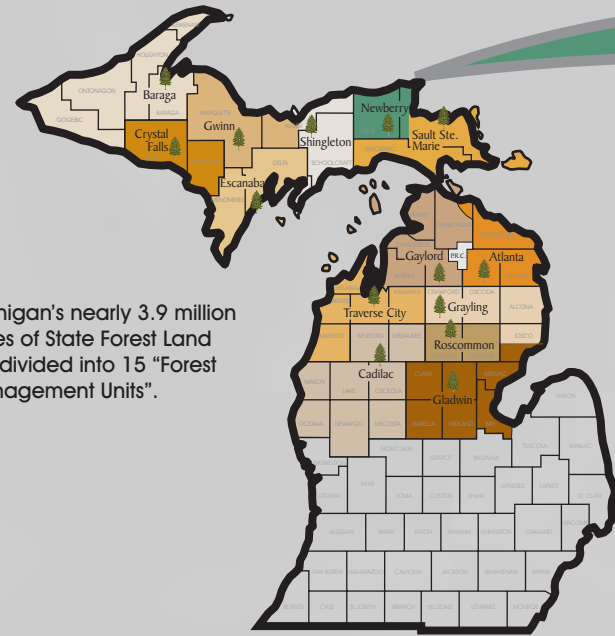
Elissa Buck, DNR, informed the committee that statewide, the DNR website will be changing coming on March 19, the website will look different. If you have pages bookmarked, they may not work after the change is implemented.

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf made a motion to adjourn. Jenny Cook and Kristie Walls are first and second to approve, with all in favor.



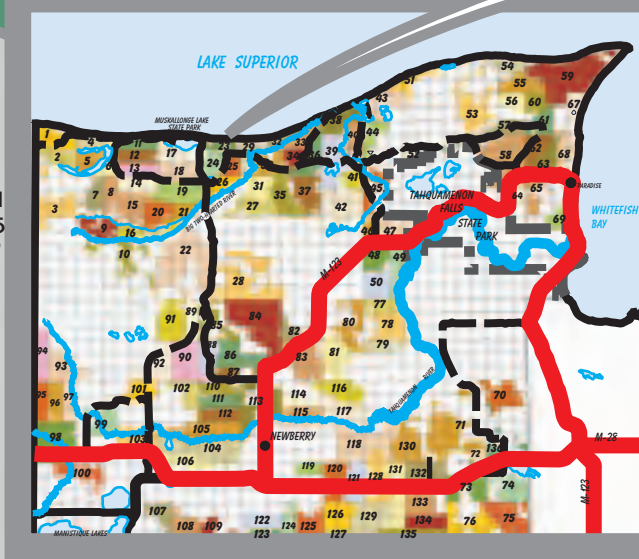
MANAGING MICHIGAN'S STATE FORESTS: YOUR GUIDE TO PARTICIPATION

Michigan's State Forests are managed to provide for the conservation, protection, integrated management, and responsible use of healthy and productive trees, forests, and ecosystems for the social, recreational, environmental, and economic benefit of the people of the State.

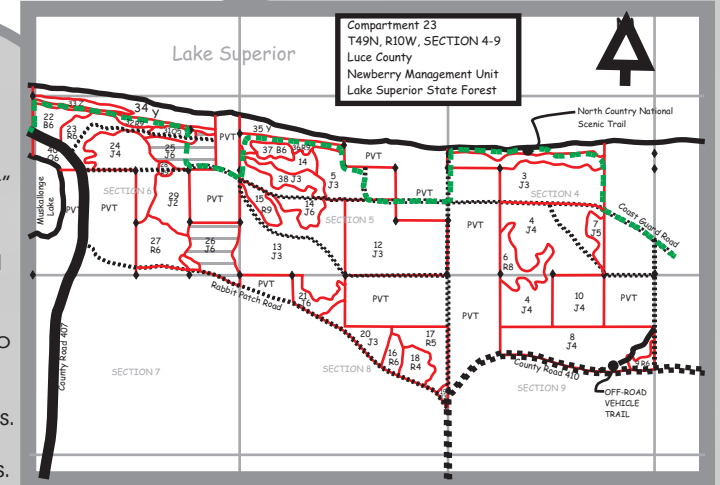


Michigan's nearly 3.9 million acres of State Forest Land are divided into 15 "Forest Management Units".

Like the Newberry Forest Management Unit pictured right, each of the state's 15 "Forest Management Units" are divided into blocks called "compartments". Each forest compartment is formally reviewed once every ten years.



Every forest "compartment" throughout the state, like *Newberry Forest Unit* *Compartment 23* pictured right, is subdivided according to the type of trees in the forest. The map also shows non-forested areas like lakes, marshes, grasslands, or shrub thickets. This map also illustrates proposed forest treatments.



1 The Inventory: *Compiling Field Information*

Using aerial photographs, land surveys, and other site specific information, Foresters visit, record biological data and map by tree species all the state-owned land in the compartment. Based on this information, foresters make initial recommendations for treatments including clear cutting, selective thinning, prescribed fires, tree planting or no treatment at all.

2 Multi-Disciplinary Input: *The Big Picture*

The inventory and draft recommendations are then reviewed by Forest Ecologists, Foresters, Recreation Specialists, Wildlife Biologists, and often Fisheries Biologists. This review results in management recommendations that have an ecosystem or holistic land management perspective. A broad range of biological, economic and social values and benefits are considered, including: campground management, fish habitat and river corridor protection, game species management, gas, mineral, oil, and timber management, historic and cultural resources, insect, disease, and invasive species management, rare or fragile species and natural community protection, soil protection, trail location and maintenance, wildfire control, and others.

3 The Open House: *Your Opportunity to Participate*

These management recommendations are then presented at "Open Houses". As the name implies, Open Houses are informal sessions that give citizens an opportunity to speak with foresters, wildlife biologists, and other resource professionals. The inventories, compartment maps, and recommended management actions are available for the public to look at and provide suggestions to MDNR staff.

4 The Compartment Review: *The Final Plan*

Modifications to the management recommendations are then incorporated into a finalized compartment plan to be presented at the "Compartment Review". The Compartment Review is a formal presentation that incorporates information from the initial inventory, the multi-disciplinary input period, and the open house. The presentation outlines the formal management plan for the compartment and includes an explanation of forest treatments if any are proposed.



Horse Trails to close to bikes, only the designated horse trail within these areas, not the entire trail system

Southeast MI

- Proud Lake – has plans to build separate bike trails, close horse trails to bikes

Northern Lower Peninsula

- Big Oaks – 26 miles
- Tin Cup Springs - 20 miles
- Shore to Shore Trail – 420 miles
- Elk Hill – 60 miles

Upper Peninsula

- Cedar River North – 17.5 miles
- Headquarters Lake – 25 miles
- Thunder Valley – 9 miles

Horse Trails already closed to bikes

Southeast MI

- Brighton Rec
- Highland Rec
- Maybury State Park
- Ortonville Rec
- Pinckney Rec
- Pontiac Lake Rec

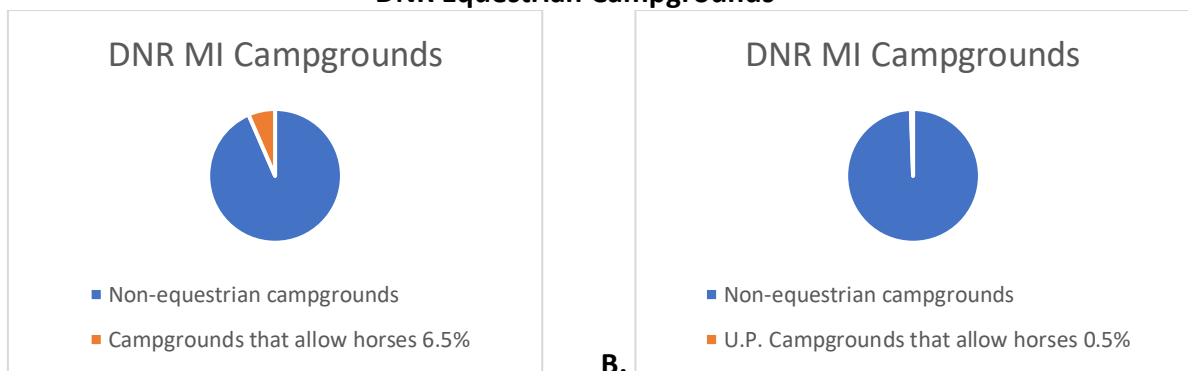
Central MI

- Ionia Rec
- Sleepy Hollow State Park
- Waterloo Rec
- Yankee Springs Rec

Southwest MI

- Bass River Rec
- Fort Custer (except one agreed upon multi-use section)

DNR Equestrian Campgrounds



- A. 6.5% of the total DNR-managed campgrounds in Michigan allow equestrian camping
 B. 0.5% of the total DNR-managed campgrounds in Michigan which allow equestrians are in the U.P.

Equestrians camping with their horses are not permitted in 93.5% of the DNR-managed campgrounds in Michigan as shown in the above chart. Only 6.5% of the total DNR-managed campgrounds in Michigan allow equestrian camping and only 0.5% of those campgrounds are in the U.P. As an example of what trail riders are requesting, there are only 2 DNR-managed campgrounds in the U.P. which allow for equestrian camping. Trail riders request that Headquarters Lake be designated for camping with a horse. At this time, there are only 6 camping sites available at this campground. In the surrounding area, there are 9 other campgrounds which amounts to 313 total campsites available in the area. Trail riders ask that the DNR protect the 6 equestrian campsites, only 1.9% of the available campsites in this area, for campers who have a horse. The other 307 campsites in the area do not allow for equestrian camping and it is 2.5 hours to the next closest campground which allows horses. Trail riders are also only asking for 8 other sites at the Cedar River North Campground in the U.P. to be designated for camping with a horse. This would preserve 14 campsites in the whole of the U.P. under DNR-management.

DNR-Managed Equestrian Campgrounds:

- Big Oaks Equestrian State Forest Campground, Atlanta, MI, Northern Lower
- Black Lake Trail Camp, Cheboygan, MI, Northern Lower
- Brighton Recreation Area, Howell, MI, Southeast
- Cedar River North State Forest, Escanaba, MI, Upper Peninsula
- Elk Hill, Vanderbilt, MI, Northern Lower
- Fort Custer Recreation Area, Augusta, MI, Southwest
- Headquarters Lake, Newberry, MI, Upper Peninsula
- Highland Recreation Area, White Lake, MI, Southeast
- Hopkins Creek (Shore to Shore camp), Manton, MI Northern Lower
- Ionia Recreation Area, Ionia, MI, South Central
- Ortonville Recreation Area, Goodrich, MI, Southeast
- Pontiac Lake Recreation Area, White Lake, MI, Southeast
- Shore to Shore Camps, Northern Lower
- Stanley Lake, Upper Peninsula
- Tin Cup Springs, Luther, MI, Northern Lower
- Waterloo Recreation Area, Grass Lake, MI, South Central
- Yankee Springs Recreation Area, Middleville, MI, South Central

Regional ETS Report – March 2022 - KAREN BAHRMAN

Since there is really nothing substantive to report from the UP – no response to my Stanley Lake proposal, no progress with respect to the planned expansion of the Thunder Valley Equestrian Trail (which has been decimated by logging anyway), etc., I may as well discuss our proposed amendments to the “Right to Ride” act.

MCL 324.72110a(12) calls for the ETS to, among other things, “[a]dvice the advisory council and the department on the development and **use** of the pack and saddle trails network [and] ... on other matters related to the promotion of the state’s equine industry”.

To that end we have repeatedly advised the DNR that it is not safe for horses and bikes to share trails, that these are fundamentally incompatible uses and that there needs to be reciprocal closures, indeed I submitted a 3-page proposal entitled ETS Proposal Re: Reciprocal Closures to the DNR on February 22, 2021, to which the DNR never responded even though it mentioned going to the legislature as an option should this issue be ignored.

The DNR’s subsequent attempt to suppress these efforts with an objection to our lobbying was not helpful, in terms of the relationship between the ETS and the DNR, especially when the minutes from the December 2, 2021 SAW meeting reflect a discussion of their more advanced legislation, HB 4535, including whether they should vote on it as members of SAW, with no objection posed by the DNR.

Certainly the DNR could find a legitimate pathway to preventing lobbying, by adopting policy with respect to the other advisory workgroups, which are creatures of enabling legislation, and modifying the statutes which created MTAC and ETS, but this could be counterproductive as follows: We are also interested in “bridle tag” legislation, something I’m sure the DNR would support, but since equestrians aren’t as united on this issue as they are on the separation of horses and bikes, we would need to explore why some are opposed (probably because they lack confidence that the funds would be expended on equestrian trails) and try to change minds, aka lobbying.

In any event, our proposed amendments to the Right to Ride act are very modest insofar as we’re only seeking to have bikes prohibited on designated (posted) horse trails – the number of trails affected is actually very small. The proposal is predicated on both safety and fairness issues, referring to how the natural reaction of horses to swift/quiet movement in the woods endangers our safety, and to the fact that horses have been excluded from bike trails at the behest of bikers concerned about trail surfaces.

The response from bikers has been disappointing, to say the least, as the following common themes have emerged:

- Bikers are claiming that they're losing access to all multi-use trails, which is not true but easily rebutted with the language of the draft itself; Amy has been invited to the next NAW mtg to explain what we're trying (and not trying) to accomplish.

- Bikers are claiming that "horses cause all the damage to the trails", which is again not true but also not relevant to the separation issue (other than that it begs the question, "if horse trails are so damaged why are bikers fighting for access to them?"). It does, however, need to be fully litigated at some point. Debunking these myths is one reason that we are trying to set up a trailmaster course, taught by a professional trailbuilder who happens to be a biker himself, and persuade both DNR staff and bikers to attend in addition to equestrians.

- Bikers are most importantly claiming that any safety issue is our problem because it's the result of "out-of-control" horses. I regard myself as a confident rider, a bit less so now that I'm Medicare age because reaction times and balance diminish with age and one needs those things to stick a big spook, but I'm still someone who goes out alone on horses with lots of trail experience; I can't tell you how scary it is, though, to be sitting on a horse when a group of bikers suddenly appears on a blind curve or over the crest of a hill (although its even worse to be approached from behind because that robs you of your own reaction time, meaning that the horse is the first one to know). So scary that when I pull into the trailhead of a horse trail and see vehicles with bike racks, I usually pull back out and go somewhere else and this is how equestrians are being elbowed off their own trails all over the state – riders who are worried about meeting bikes are simply surrendering their trails to bikers. So, the argument that its our fault when our horses spook at bikes and we are thrown/injured/killed, because we should have had them under better control, really shows that no one has been listening to us at all when we've explained that horses are hard-wired to react to certain stimuli, and that we are therefore in as much in danger from such attitudes as we are from the objective nature of bike travel.

Karen Bahrman, UP ETS Rep

85.46 HORSE PASS.

Subdivision 1. **Pass in possession.** (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), while riding, leading, or driving a horse on lands administered by the commissioner, except forest roads and forest roads rights-of-way, a person 16 years of age or over shall carry in immediate possession a valid horse pass. The pass must be available for inspection by a peace officer, a conservation officer, or an employee designated under section 84.0835. A person who violates any provision of this subdivision is guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

(b) A valid horse pass is not required under this section for a person riding, leading, or driving a horse on property that is owned by the person or the person's spouse, child, parent, or guardian.

Subd. 2. **License agents.** (a) The commissioner of natural resources may appoint agents to issue and sell horse passes. The commissioner may revoke the appointment of an agent at any time.

(b) The commissioner may adopt additional rules as provided in section 97A.485, subdivision 11. An agent shall observe all rules adopted by the commissioner for the accounting and handling of passes according to section 97A.485, subdivision 11.

(c) An agent must promptly deposit and remit all money received from the sale of passes, except issuing fees, to the commissioner.

Subd. 3. **Issuance.** The commissioner of natural resources and agents shall issue and sell horse passes. The pass shall include the applicant's signature and other information deemed necessary by the commissioner. To be valid, a daily or annual pass must be signed by the person riding, leading, or driving the horse, and a commercial annual pass must be signed by the owner of the commercial riding facility.

Subd. 4. **Pass fees.** (a) The fee for an annual horse pass is \$20 for an individual 16 years of age and over. The fee shall be collected at the time the pass is purchased. Annual passes are valid for one year beginning January 1 and ending December 31.

(b) The fee for a daily horse pass is \$4 for an individual 16 years of age and over. The fee shall be collected at the time the pass is purchased. The daily pass is valid only for the date designated on the pass form.

(c) The fee for a commercial annual horse pass is \$200 and includes issuance of 15 passes. Additional or individual commercial annual horse passes may be purchased by the commercial riding facility owner at a fee of \$20 each. Commercial annual horse passes are valid for one year beginning January 1 and ending December 31 and may be affixed to the horse tack, saddle, or person. Commercial annual horse passes are not transferable to another commercial riding facility. For the purposes of this section, a "commercial riding facility" is an operation where horses are used for riding instruction or other equestrian activities for hire or use by others.

Subd. 5. **Issuing fee.** In addition to the fee for a horse pass, an issuing fee of \$1 per pass shall be charged. The issuing fee shall be retained by the seller of the pass. Issuing fees for passes sold by the commissioner of natural resources shall be deposited in the state treasury and credited to the horse pass account in the natural resources fund and are appropriated to the commissioner for the operation of the electronic licensing system. A pass shall indicate the amount of the fee that is retained by the seller.

Subd. 6. **Disposition of receipts.** Fees collected under this section, except for the issuing fee, shall be deposited in the state treasury and credited to the horse pass account in the natural resources fund. Except for the electronic licensing system commission established by the commissioner under section 84.027, subdivision 15, the fees are appropriated to the commissioner of natural resources for trail acquisition, trail

and facility development, and maintenance, enforcement, and rehabilitation of horse trails or trails authorized for horse use, whether for riding, leading, or driving, on land administered by the commissioner.

Subd. 7. Duplicate horse passes. The commissioner of natural resources and agents shall issue a duplicate pass to a person or commercial riding facility owner whose pass is lost or destroyed using the process established under section 97A.405, subdivision 3, and rules adopted thereunder. The fee for a duplicate horse pass is \$2, with an issuing fee of 50 cents.

History: 2006 c 282 art 9 s 8; 2008 c 368 art 2 s 7; 2009 c 37 art 1 s 22-24; 2010 c 361 art 4 s 36; 2012 c 272 s 20

Combined Volunteer Values 2021
Equestrian Groups

Non Trail or Non DNR Groups

MHC 6,053.17

MCTRA 2,116.24 brand new group

Group	Amount
Allegan County Pleasure Riders	
Back Country Horsemen of MI	57,292.23
Bass River Rec. Area (new group)	
Big Oaks	256.86
Brighton Trail Riders Assc.	8,244.35
Courtney Lake	
F.A.C.E.T.S.	39,892.52
Fort Custer Horse Friends Assc.	45,560.54
Headquarters Lake	
Highland Trail Riders Assc.	7,148.48
Ionia Horse Trails Association	10,372.61
Amy Scharmen - ETS	7,752.81
Jenny Cook - ETS	36,842.28
Kristie Walls - ETS	656.42
Maybury S.P. Trail Riders Assc.	949.01
Michigan Trail Riders Assc.	89,601.92
Ortonville Trail Riders Assc.	23,839.45
Pinckney Trail Riders Assc.	10,932.73
Pontiac Lake Trail Riders Assc.	345,099.88
Proud Lake Trail Riders	21,007.81
Sleepy Hollow Trail Riders Assc.	22,609.62
Thunder Valley Equestrian	
Waterloo Horsemen's Assc.	51,823.03
Yankee Springs Trail Riders Assc.	2,240.39
Grand Total	782,122.94

plus what the park paid for equipment to clear trails

MICHIGAN

Where Dreams Come True

Michigan Shoreline Horseback Riding Silver Lake State Park, Mears, MI



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

Come experience the Lake Michigan shoreline like you never have before. Floating over the sand as you traverse the dunes and Lake Michigan shoreline by horseback has been described as “The ultimate freedom”, “Best ride of my life!”, “Definitely a day to remember!”, “A dream come true”.



pc: Michigan Photo Ambassador Joel Marotti
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

After enjoying horseback riding along the sandy shorelines in Mexico, Jenny Cook, Michigan Equine Trails Representative, was inspired to start a similar experience along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Cook researched where there are multiple miles of sandy Lake Michigan shoreline and found three miles managed by the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources Silver Lake State Park in Mears, Michigan. Cook and few other members of the Michigan Equine Trails Subcommittee preformed several private and public pilot rides.



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

Ride Details:

Shoreline horse backing riding opportunities will be offered after the Off-Road Vehicle season at Silver Lake State Park during the month of November. **Please text “TROT” to 80888 to sign up to be notified from the MDNR of opportunities.** Participants must bring their own horse. Parking Reservations may be offered from the MDNR for a limited number of participants. Participants may be allowed to travel the most direct dune route across the ORV dunes starting at the ORV Dune Exit Ramp, 1.1 miles of ORV dunes to approximately three miles of Silver Lake State Park Lake Michigan shoreline. The ORV dune route and shoreline will be kept barefoot ready with dune route manure maintenance.



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

When Dreams Become Reality

Before these opportunities were offered, riding your horse along the sandy Lake Michigan shoreline was something horse lovers could only dream of. Now many people with horses have been able to experience their dreams become reality.

While horseback riding the Lake Michigan shoreline you are not only **surrounded by nature**, with the beautiful, vast expanse of the dunes, sky, and Lake Michigan, you are also enjoying a **partnership with a natural creature surrounded by nature.**



pc: Joe Gall Photography
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

Traveling with Horses:

There are many factors to consider when traveling with horses. Time, knowledge, money, physical fitness, mental fitness, cool confidence, and horses that are physically fit, mentally fit, with good work ethics, and appropriate energy levels. A partnership of layers of trust built by consistent, positive training, and communication with your horse are also needed. Horses are not a simple hobby that is picked up or stored away for a season. Horses are living, breathing, natural, therapy, recreation, show, sport, and transportation partners.



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

A full-size truck and horse trailer are needed to haul horses and tack (saddle, saddle pad, bridle, halter), grooming supplies, medical supplies, emergency supplies, manure clean up supplies, hay, and water for the horses. Riders need to bring their own manure forks and muck bucket supplies to clean up after their own horses in the parking area. It is best to dress for the weather with layers of clothes including a helmet, neck warmer, gloves, jacket, long pants, and boots. Be sure to pack an extra set of clothes including boots in case you get wet. Since the water will be already turned off due to winterization at Silver Lake State Park, horseback riders must bring their own water for both themselves and their horses.



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

Spacious parking with ample space around trucks and trailers is necessary for loading/unloading horses behind horse trailers, space on the sides of the horse trailers for tacking up horses, and enough space to keep horses separate from other horses.



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

Upon arrival, riders layer up with extra layers of clothes to prepare for cooler temperatures at the shoreline. Horses are unloaded, tacked up with a saddle pad, saddle, and bridle. Then we mount up and ride on!



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

Riding Tips:

When riding up the dunes it is recommended to walk or “shuffle” your horse. Try to avoid loping, cantering, or running uphill as these gaits can cause your horse to dig deeper in the sand which can be more strenuous. Consider taking breaks to let your horse catch their breath as needed.



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

When introducing your horse to the Lake Michigan shoreline:

Consider riding with another seasoned shoreline rider.

Consider riding parallel to the shoreline for a distance and not directly into the water. Let your horse get accustomed to these new terrains.

Consider watching for their body language for when they indicate they are ready to proceed.



pc: Pure Michigan
Silver Lake State Park, Michigan

Bring Your Own Horse:

There are no horse rentals available at this location. Please refer to the Michigan Horse Trails Directory to find locations where there are horse rental opportunities throughout Michigan and horse trails, camping, events, and volunteer friends' groups. <http://michiganhorsetrails.com/>

A Few More Details about Horses:

Horses are cultural and historical. They have carved their place in history and carried us unto the future on their backs. Today, horses are declared health partners as **Equine Assisted Services (EAS)** providing emotional, mental, physical, and substance abuse therapy.

Horses are Prey Animals. Due to the natural pecking order of predator and prey, horses expect us to be the leaders of our partnerships. This provides opportunities to practice confidence, empathy, empowerment, kindness, leadership skills, patience, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and self-discipline. Horses appreciate when they are treated with respect.



pc: Joe Gall Photography
Silver Lake State Park. Michigan

Please refer to the **TRAILS SAFE PASSING PLAN: STOP, SPEAK, and STAND BACK** for more information about horses and an action plan for when you encounter people with horses. <https://elcr.org/trails-safe-passing-plan/>

Dreams become plans and plans become realities. Enjoy!!

Many thanks to the organizations who have helped make these opportunities possible: Michigan Department of Natural Resource, Back Country Horsemen of Michigan, Grace Adventures, Michigan Horse Council, and the Equine Trails Subcommittee.

Jenny Cook
Michigan Equine Trails Subcommittee (MTAC)
SW Michigan Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS)
mi.trail.rep@gmail.com