



# EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes  
Hart Community Center  
407 S. State Street  
Hart, MI 49420  
Nov. 6, 2023  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## **Welcome – Roll Call**

### EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS):

- Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf, Chairperson
- Jenny Cook, Vice Chairperson
- Dug Jordan
- Brandy Miller
- Anna Lee
- Sam Norman

### DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

- Tim Novak, Annalisa Centofanti, Sage Hegdal, Blake Gingrich, Paige Perry, , Ron Yesney, Nicole Hunt, Greg Kinser, Scott Slavin, Rob Katona, Peter Costa, Lee Maynard, Earl Flegler

OTHERS: Paul Erickson, Connie Cargill, Nichole Kleiner

## **Meeting minutes**

### ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m.

Motion made to approve Sept. 12, minutes by Jenny Cook and seconded by Dug Jordan, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made to approve the Nov. 6, agenda by Dug Jordan and seconded by Brandy Miller, with all in favor. Motion carried.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Erickson / Hart MI-Oceana Fairgrounds

Paul Erickson provided history and background regarding the trail head located at the Oceana Fairgrounds. Mr. Erickson is working with the DNR to connect portions of the Hart-Montague and William Field Memorial trails to form positive impacts on the communities and riders. Mr. Erickson is sharing his vision to open a trailhead in Hart Michigan for equestrians. Currently the Oceana Fairgrounds is open for equestrians to use for parking, staging, and camping.

Scott Slavin, DNR, met on Nov. 3 with Paul Erickson, Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf, and Jenny Cook regarding the Hart Montague trail opening for equestrian use, creating a parallel trail. Scott mentioned the meeting was productive and moving on to discussing next steps.

## BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### ETS REGIONAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Brandy Miller** - see attached report.

**Jenny Cook** – see attached report.

**Sam Norman** – see attached report.

**Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf** - see attached report.

### Dug Jordan

Dug Jordan asked for an update on the Cheboygan camp. Greg Kinser, DNR, reported that conversations are still happening with the city on the second parcel. The DNR does have ownership of the 5 acres.

Dug Jordan asked for an update on Tin Cup Campground. Scott Slavin, DNR, reported the Tin Cup Campground is still under construction, and the project has slowed down due to DNR staffing issues.

### Anna Lee

### TRAILS SUMMIT REVIEW

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Amy mentioned the Trails Summit went well, and she has heard good feedback. Amy is excited action items have been identified and documented. These items will help workgroups get organized and become more effective.

Brandy Miller added she felt a good job was done maximizing time and it was interesting to see other workgroups dynamics.

Jenny Cook said she appreciated other user groups being candid and listening to their perspectives, as well as getting to know them.

### **PRD DESIGNATED HORSE TRAIL MAPS**

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Amy shared a map from the DNR with local equestrian trail groups for feedback which identifies equestrian trails throughout Michigan. Amy received some discrepancies and shared those with Nicole Hunt, DNR, for review.

### **HORSE TRAIL DESIGNATIONS**

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

#### **Big Oaks / Shore to Shore Circle Riding / Headquarter Lake**

BIG OAKS-current equestrian trails are rocky and not desirable. Other single-track trails in the area are desirable. It is difficult to navigate without any maps of the trails. Amy would like to work with the DNR on identifying the trails that people want to ride. Paige Perry, DNR, has been discussing this with staff and will provide updates to Amy.

SHORE TO SHORE CIRCLE RIDING-some camps along the shore to shore are destination camps. destination camps along the circle riding. The equestrians would like to see some of these trails designated as equestrian trails. Scott Slavin, DNR, mentioned that portions of the Shore to Shore are on private lands and roadways. DNR recommends next steps is to discuss with unit managers and trail specialist. Greg Kinser, DNR, added to pull together an overall strategy for the trail proposal and identify a core group. Additionally, it is important to have a group identified that will be maintaining these trails before the proposal is submitted.

HEADQUARTER LAKE-Sam Norman is not looking to designate any more trails at this time.

### **STATE FOREST MAPS**

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Equestrians have recognized that there is a need to provide state forest maps that show motorized trails, equestrian trails, roads, and bodies of water which will help avoiding confusion where riders are getting lost. Amy said more riders need to be encouraged to use phone mapping apps. **ACTION:** Greg Kinser mentioned this item will need to be presented as a project proposal with a drafted scope, partitioning by region and has asked Amy to present to Kim Kennedy, DNR.

### **TRAIL ETIQUETTE SIGNAGE**

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Amy is submitting trail etiquette sign suggestions to the DNR for review. These suggestions are for the current trail sign project within the DNR where signs are currently in review and working on

updates as needed. ETS is asking the DNR to communicate with them as to what they plan to use for the signs.

### **ETS TRAIL IMPROVEMENT TRACKER**

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Amy has provided the DNR with a list of "hopes and dreams" for equestrian trail projects. Amy recently updated the file and shared with Scott Slavin for review.

### **NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

Tim Novak, DNR

Tim remarked that during the recent Trails Summit, board members proposed to create a workgroup focused on non-motorized trail maintenance. The purpose will be to share thoughts and ideas on maintaining, sustaining, and improving existing nonmotorized trails. Tim recommends 2-3 people from each subcommittee (NAW and ETS) to be involved.

## **UPDATES**

### **ETS TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROGRESS/GOALS**

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf / Sage Hegdal, DNR

Amy has reviewed and verified the list of goals with ETS members and shared with Sage Hegdal for her to track. Sage has outlined goals and objectives.

### **NAW/ETS MEETING DATE**

Meeting has been set to formulate an agenda and Anna Centofanti, DNR, will send out a meeting poll to committee members with potential dates.

### **2024 MEETING DATES**

Coming Soon

## **ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING COMMENTS**

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf suggested including the following topics on the next meeting agenda.

- Michelle O'Kelly (DNR) process in becoming/establishing (MOU), interacting, and identifying friend's groups (presentation).
- Financials nonmotorized trails.
- Trail Implementation Progress/Goals Follow-up.

Meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

### **Sleepy Hollow**

- Recent Events:
  - 10/27-10/29 - Canceled their camp weekend due to rain and fear of damaging the trails
- Upcoming Events:
- Project Updates:
- Other:
  - Custom Memorial Fire Ring was removed, however discussions between DNR managers and trail group leader resulted in an agreement to bring the old fire ring out for the group events, then it will be removed after each event.

### **Ionia**

- Recent Events:
  - Oct. 6-8 - Chili Cook Off Weekend
- Upcoming Events:
  - 11/4/23 - Workbee planned to add several additional corrals.
- Project Updates:
  - Announcements posted regarding Electrical hook up progress

### **Yankee Springs** <https://ystra.org/>

- Recent Events:
  - 10/14/23 - Halloween Spooktacular - canceled due to weather
- Upcoming Events:
  - 1/1/24 - New Year's Day ride
- Project Updates:
  - Attention is being brought to the new signs pointing riders to the new day staging area
- Other: (Yankee)
  -

### **Waterloo**

- Recent Events:
  - 11/1/23 - Turkey Trot
  - 10/28-10/29 - Portage Lake ride was a success, after being rescheduled due to rain
- Upcoming Events:
- Project Updates:
  - New High Line / Picket Poles were installed in the Maute Road staging area
- Other:

### **Waterloo Hunt Club** - No Report

All is well at Ft Custer Rec Area and Bass River Rec Area. We appreciate working together with the DNR to keep trails open and sustainable.

The Shoreline Horseback Riding Season is going great! There are over 2400 reservations for the month of November with 125 horses per day. Many of the first two weeks and weekends are sold out.

Here are some trail yielding signage we have discovered from across the nation and some of our suggestions to promote access and safety for everyone.

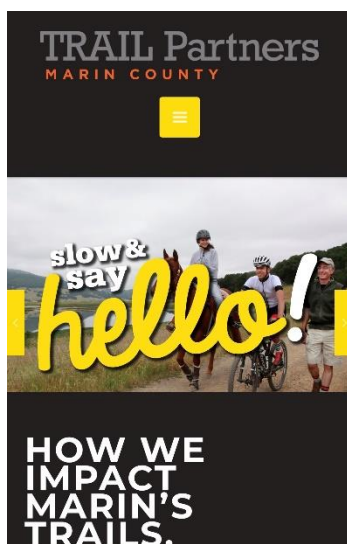
Go Slow and Say Hello <https://safetrailsmarin.org/>

Be nice say “hi” <https://benicesayhi.bigcartel.com/products>

Trails Safe Passing Plan Stop, Speak, and Stand Back <https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/trails-safe-passing-plan-tspp.html>

Ask to Pass Yield to (Icon of horseback rider)

Etiquette Page on the Michigan Horse Trails Directory <http://michiganhorsetrails.com/trailetiquette.html>



## Trail Etiquette



### Share the Trail

#### Non-Motorized Multi-Use Trail Etiquette

Whether you are hiking on the single-track trail or biking on the multi-use trail, it's important for everyone to understand safe trail etiquette. All other trail users yield to horses.

##### How to Safely Approach Horses on Multi-Use Trails

###### If approaching head-on:

**Stop!** Please stop your movement.

**Stand Back!** Stand back off the trail but do not hide, remain in view of the horse and rider.

**Speak!** Call out in a friendly tone to alert horse and rider of your presence. At this time allow the rider to pass by or they may ask you to pass by.

###### If approaching from behind:

**Speak!** Alert the rider and horse of your presence.

**Stop!** Ask the rider if it is OK to pass, they may need time to turn their horse around and they may want to walk back and past you.

**Give Space!** Whether you pass or they do, give them plenty of room.

**PRINTABLE SIGNAGE**



### Share the Trail

#### Motorized Multi-Use Trail Etiquette

Motorized trail users are required to yield to all other trail users, horses included.

##### How to Safely Approach Horses on Multi-Use Trails

###### If approaching head-on:

**Stop!** Please stop your movement and turn off your engine.

Because your helmet or the horse can see you are a human.

**Speak!** Call out in a friendly tone to the horse and rider. At this time allow the rider to pass by.

###### If approaching from behind:

**Stop!** Please stop your movement and turn off your engine.

Because your helmet or the horse can see you are a human.

**Speak!** Call out in a friendly tone to the horse and rider.

Ask the rider if it is OK to pass, they may need time to turn their horse around and they may want to walk back and past you.

**Give Space!** Whether you pass or they do, give them plenty of room.

**PRINTABLE SIGNAGE**



Please other riders in the same path they are.

Please if there is a horse signal that from the.

### Articles and Videos

[Safe Encounter with Horses on Shared Use Trails](#)

[Trail Etiquette and Safety Article](#)

[Trail Etiquette Video](#)

[Trail Etiquette Video](#)

[Be's Pasture Plan Series](#)



### Safety Tip

Other trail users should yield on the down side of a slope to allow horses to pass uphill. This will protect the horse and rider from slipping off the trail and down the slope.

Horses are only afraid of two things - everything that moves and everything that doesn't.

Riders work very hard to gain their horses trust and expose them to a wide variety of experiences and continue to build on this throughout the horse's lifetime. The fact is, horses are prey animals and they can view everything as a potential predator, not all do, but they can. This is why staying in the sight line of the horse and speaking as you approach is so important. Horses know human voice and it comforts them. If a rider is having trouble, ask what you can do to help and even if a rider is not having trouble it is always good etiquette to ask how they would like to handle passing each other on the trail.

### MANURE

Please practice leave no trace in our staging areas throughout Michigan. Dispose of manure in bunkers or please take it back home with you. Help keep our staging areas clean for all to use. Check for rules for the areas you ride.

[Manure Etiquette](#)



## ETS Report for the UP

11/6/ 2023

### **The Headquarters Lake**

- The trail system survived the select cutting activities in the areas harvested by the trails.
- There was a good turnout for a work day the group had set aside for repair and replacement of confidence markers and posts. The weather near Lake Superior tends to be ruff on all of the trail marking.
- There has been some progress with private land access for the Stanley Lakes trail proposal.
- I am in the process of opening conversations with the various horse groups in the UP. Best response has been in the western up.

Sam Norman



Horses have a lot of information to process all at once and all the time. In trail riding scenarios if a horse doesn't interpret information about its surroundings by properly identify objects, they are at risk for overreacting (in human terms) which might include a fight (kicking, bucking) or flight (bolting or whirling around) response. In the wild, these responses are what have kept the species alive for millions of years. Today, these instinctive survival responses could harm the rider. And although horses have a large presence, they must learn to be brave and unafraid.

When equestrian trails are present, park agencies have an added obligation of protecting experiences by creating safe trail corridors that include: educational campaigns geared toward non-equestrians trail users; steady and targeted rule enforcement in known problem areas; pairing of compatible uses; and proper trail planning and maintenance.

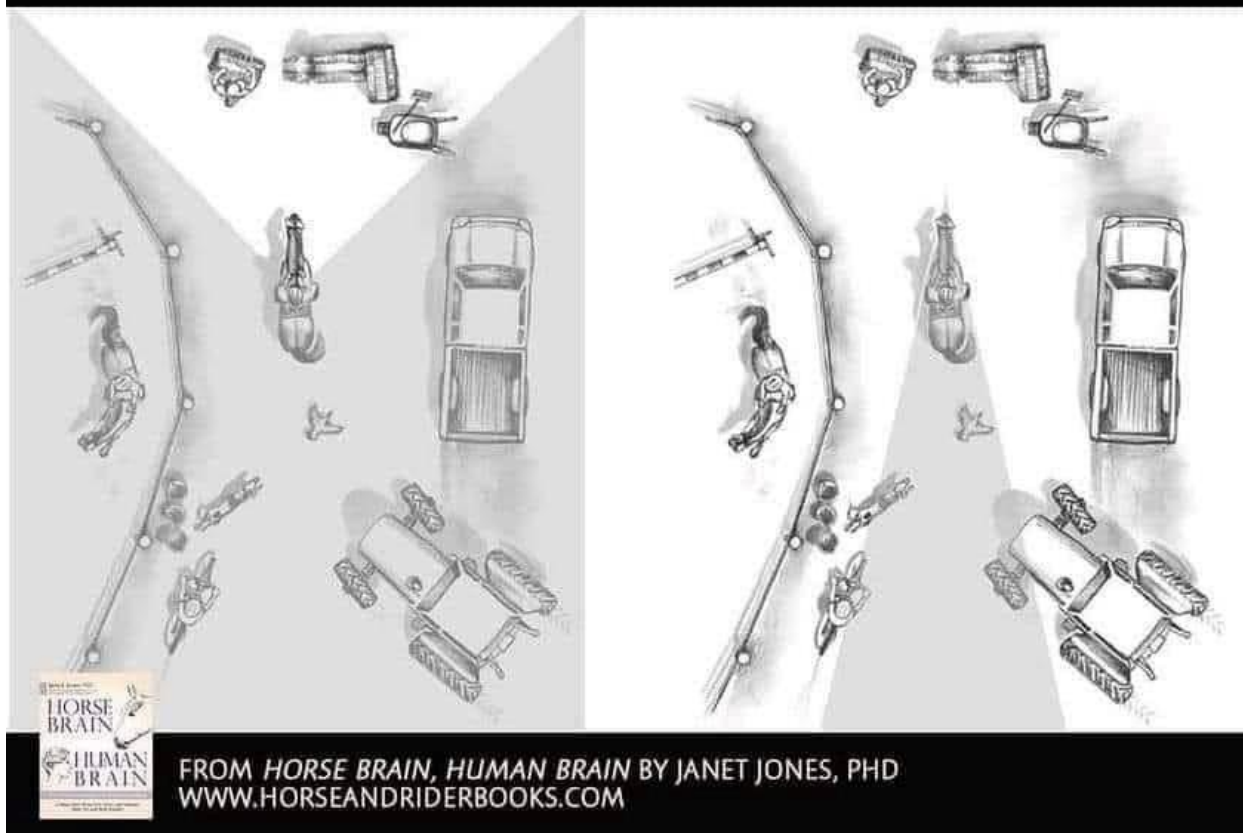
The visual below from Janet L. Jones PhD., illustrates a horse's range of sight and is a great example of some of the "things" we expect our horses to accept without overreacting.

- Lora Goerlich  
<https://www.horsetrailexpert.com/>

# ONE SCENE, TWO VIEWS

The white area below indicates what the rider sees.

The white area below indicates what the horse sees.



Side by side photos comparing what a horseback rider sees vs. what a horse sees. The rider has a very forward view of the world, the horse almost 360 degrees. At any given time, the horse can see much more of the environment than a rider can.