

Pigeon River Country Equestrian Committee

Official Meeting Minutes

Location: DNR Roscommon Customer Service Center

Date: May 11, 2023

A meeting of the Pigeon River Country Equestrian Committee (P.R.C.E.C.) was held on May 11, 2023 at the Roscommon DNR office. Chairperson Barb Curtis called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The meeting started with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Barb Curtis, Chuck Fanslow, Kerry Mase, Darlene Alexander, Carol Clute, Natascha Graham, Norma Laine

Members Absent:

Bonnie Cornelius, Sandy Franz, Lynn Noll

Ex-Officio Present:

Forest Resources Division: Mark Monroe – P.R.C.S.F. Manager

Parks and Recreation Division:

Richard Hill – Gaylord District Supervisor

Jeff Clarke – Otsego Lake State Park Supervisor and P.R.C.S.F. Recreation Programs

Paige Perry – Recreation Trails Specialist

Ex-Officio Absent:

Wildlife Division: Shelby Adams, PRC Wildlife Biologist

Comments from the Chair:

Barb Curtis thanked everyone for attending and expressed that she had enjoyed serving as the Chairperson but that she was resigning that post effective immediately and that Vice-Chair Chuck Fanslow would conduct today's meeting.

Jeff Clarke, who is temporary supervisor for Otsego Lake State Park and Recreational programs at the P.R.C.S.F. was welcomed to the committee.

Approval of Meeting Minutes and Agenda:

Motion to accept the October 25, 2022 Minutes and the current Agenda was made by Natascha Graham and seconded by Darlene Alexander. Motion carried.

Unfinished Business:

Update on the six connectors and the Inspiration Point Trail Requests

Paige Perry, Recreational Trails Specialist, reported that Scott Whitcomb had reviewed the requests for additional connectors and a trail at Inspiration Point with Director Eichinger at the end of November and it was decided to only pursue one of the connectors that ran parallel to Hardwood Lake Road to allow horses to be off the county road for reasons of safety. On April 11, 2023 Christine Hanaburge, DNR Wildlife Division's Federal Aid Coordinator, confirmed that this connector was approved by the USFWS. This new connector can be flagged and cleared at the May Work bee and the DNR will add this connector to the Equestrian Riding map.

Update on the Cornwall Dam Project

Mark Monroe, Manager of PRCSF, gave a presentation outlining the history of the dam and the current status. The dam was constructed in 1966 by DNR Fisheries. The 2019 inspection deemed the dam to be in "poor" condition with a High Hazard potential -failure would cause serious damage to homes and infrastructure and probably cause loss of life. The original estimate for repairing the dam was between \$410,000 to \$725,000. Attempts to secure funding were not successful. The current cost of repair is \$800,000 to \$1.4 million. The Department is seeking to have an engineering/geo-tech inspection of the dam which might result in a different estimate for repair. Even if funds are secured the water will still need to be drawn down to work on the dam. A citizens advocacy group has initiated a campaign to raise the necessary funds to save the flooding.

Solar Well and Hand Pump well request at Group Campground

Jeff Clarke, Temporary supervisor for Otsego Lake State Park and Recreational Programs at PRCSF reported that even through the Department has purchased all the necessary components for a Solar operated well, funds for a new well are not available. At the last meeting of the P.R.C.E.C. it was requested that they consider whether the current well in the Group campground might be operated by both a generator and a Solar device. In response, Rangers Sam Black and Logan Graff did a preliminary test which indicated that it very likely would work. Some additional funds will be needed to set the system up.

New Business:

Election of Officers

Darlene Alexander made a Motion to retain the current officers with Chuck Fanslow as Chair, Barb Curtis as Vice Chair and Kerry Mase as Secretary. Seconded by Carol Clute. Motion carried.

Pigeon River Country Advisory Council

Barb Curtis reported that she was asked at a Recreation and Access subcommittee if the equestrians supported quiet hours in our campground between 10 pm and 8 am. She indicated

that we have although there are some campers who for medical reasons need to run a generator during those times. Campers who do are asked to camp away from the other campers if possible. Since an equestrian access trail to Inspiration Point was not granted the question of providing a hitching post in the parking lot area was raised. Mark Monroe will look into it.

Equine Trails Subcommittee

Darlene Alexander reported that she had heard that the revision to the Right to Ride legislation has been sent back to a legislative committee for further revision. ETS is supporting designating some campgrounds as Horse Only campgrounds. There continues to be problems with non-horse people camping in campgrounds used by equestrians.

Paige Perry reports that there has been discussion at ETS about problems with bike riders and horses using the same trails. The Department is updating its policy on peddle bikes and e-bikes and their access.

Michigan Trail Riders Association

Chuck Fanslow reported that the boardwalk at Luzerne has not yet been repaired and it is recommended that horses stay off. The current estimate is that it will cost half a million dollars to replace the entire boardwalk with the white oak that MTRA originally had recommended be used. Instead, the contractor used an inferior quality wood, possibly ash, which has quickly rotted. This section of the Shore to Share trail is within federal lands and is managed by the US Forest service.

Pigeon River State Forest

Mark Monroe shared that the PRCSF Forest Management plan for 2025 will be on-line June 19th and can be viewed in person at the open house July 19th from 3 to 6 pm at the Field Office. Comments can be submitted on-line or in person at the open house.

The DNR is still in negotiations to purchase the Black River ranch. This is the area that sustained significant fire damage earlier, but the aspen is coming back and really drawing the elk and deer.

NEXT MEETING:

September 13, 2023, 1:00 pm at the Roscommon DNR Office

Respectfully Submitted,
Kerry K. Mase
Secretary