

# Pigeon River Country Equestrian Committee

## Official Meeting Minutes

Location: DNR Roscommon Customer Service Center

Date: October 25, 2022

A meeting of the Pigeon River Country Equestrian Committee (P.R.C.E.C.) was held on October 25, 2022 at the Roscommon DNR office. Chairperson Barb Curtis called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. The meeting started with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Members Present:**

Barb Curtis, Chuck Fanslow, Kerry Mase, Darlene Alexander, Natascha Graham, Lynn Noll

### **Members Absent:**

Carol Clute, Bonnie Cornelius, Sandy Franz, Norma Laine

### **Ex-Officio Present:**

Forest Division: Mark Monroe - PRCSF Manager

Parks and Recreation Division:

Kelly Kinser – Otsego Lake State Park Supervisor and PRCSF Recreation Programs,

Logan Graff – PRCSF Lead Park Ranger

### **Ex-Officio Absent:**

Wildlife Division: Brian Mastenbrook – Lower Peninsula Regional Supervisor

Richard Hill – Gaylord District Supervisor

Paige Perry- Recreation Trails Specialist

### **Others Present:**

Dug Jordan – Equestrian Trails Subcommittee – Northern Lower Peninsula Representative

### **Approval of Agenda:**

**Motion** to accept the agenda was made by Darlene Alexander and seconded by Chuck Fanslow.

Motion carried.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

**Motion** to approve the minutes for the May 17, 2022 meeting was made by Chuck Fanslow and seconded by Natascha Graham. Motion carried.

## **Unfinished Business:**

### **Update on the six connectors and the Inspiration Point Trail Requests**

Because Recreational Trails Specialist, Paige Perry, was not able to attend today's meeting, Kelly Kinser provided the Committee with an update. Because the six connectors and the Inspiration Point trail are located on lands purchased with Fish and Game Funds a final decision by the DNR Director Dan Eichinger regarding approval is pending dependent upon supportive input from USFWS. The Inspiration Point trail was not part of the original group of trails submitted in 2015 by the PRCEC to the PRC Advisory Council for their review and input. After the original group of connectors were approved by Director Moritz in 2016, Dick Kleinhardt, Lynn Noll, Chuck Fanslow and other equestrians worked with Brian Mastenbrook to lay out the proposed route at Inspiration Point. This proposed route was not brought before the Advisory Council for their input and they have requested that it is prior to the Director taking any action on this particular trail request. To that end it has been added to the Advisory Council's January 2023 Agenda.

### **Update on Cornwall Dam Project**

Mark Monroe, Manager of PRCSF reported that the DNR Director, Dan Eichinger, has not made a decision regarding this dam. Different options for addressing the poor condition of the dam have been formulated but the cost of repairs have tripled. The Flooding will remain as it is for now.

### **Solar Well River Campground-Hand Pump in Group Campground**

Kelly Kinser reported that there currently is no funding available for drilling a Solar powered well or another well in the group campground that would be operated as a hand pump. Kerry Mase questioned whether locating the solar well in the smaller campground is still the best option given that many groups who camp in the bigger campground do not have a powerful enough generator to operate the well and therefore there is no water available in that campground for all the groups that camp there. The question was raised by Barb Curtis whether or not a well could be set up to run with either a generator or by solar? Logan Graff will investigate that and will report at our next meeting. As to possibility of changing the location of the solar well, both the process and the people to talk with will also be explored by Logan.

## **New Business:**

### **Equine Trails Subcommittee**

Dug Jordan, Representative for Northern Lower Peninsula reported that Senator Runestad has introduced a bill to revise the Right to Ride Legislation. This revision if passed, will establish that bikes cannot be ridden on designated Equestrian Only Trails. Additionally some campgrounds have been identified as needing to be Equestrian Only and closed to others who do not have a horse with them.

There have been significant problems with non-horse people using equestrian campgrounds and bike use on equestrian trails. Darlene Alexander and Lynn Noll reported that equestrians have been harassed at Big Oaks. In addition to getting Big Oaks identified as an Equestrians Only Campground, many equestrians feel it should also be on the reservation system. Use of the campground has increased but many more equestrian campers would utilize this campground if they were assured that they had a site reserved prior to traveling many hours to get there.

Dug also reported that the 32 site campground should be completed this spring at Tin Cup Springs located in Lake County. The Equestrian trails are already in place and mapped.

Silver Lake Park – Lake Michigan Shoreline horseback riding will take place the first two weeks of November and is by reservation only. More information can be found on the DNR web page – horseback riding/shoreline riding.

### **Michigan Trail Riders Association**

Chuck Fanslow reported that work is progressing on the Cheboygan Campground located on a 10 acre parcel within the city limits. When the MTRA is not using the campground it will be open for use to others.

The Luzerne board walk has had some serious issues with some of the boards rotting after only 5 years of completion. The boards were supposed to be white oak but it is thought that Ash was used instead. There is a \$15,000 grant for repairs but the cost may be much higher if the right kind of boards are obtained.

### **Pigeon River State Forest**

Mark Monroe reported that clean-up is still taking place in the forest after the May 11<sup>th</sup> Black River Ranch forest fire. Approximately 150 acres of salvage cutting has or will take place which will help in the regeneration process. Salvage cutting is also taking place on 850 acres of private land owned by the Black River Ranch.

The DNR is in the process of collecting seed cones from Red Pine trees to be used in replanting forests on State owned land. Many of the State's future Red Pine trees will come from the Pigeon River Country State Forest.

Work is still being done at restoring old oil well drilling sites within the Pigeon River Country State Forest. Native grasses and trees are being used to restore the areas.

Natural Trust Fund monies will be used to purchase 400 acres of Hoobler property and the 440 acres of the Hartyl property along the Sturgeon River.

Storey Lake has 1.8 miles of road that are open to the public. This area is outside of the Concept of Management area and will be open to equestrian riding by next spring if the access plan is approved. There is room for 2 or 3 trailers to park for day use only.

Walled Lake property is open for fishing and hunting. The open vehicle roads can be ridden on by horses but riding off the roads in this area is not allowed.

Grant money is being used to make necessary improvements and upgrades at the PRCSF Headquarters. The old bunkhouse is being fixed up for temporary staff and students.

### **New Business:**

Kelly Kinser provided a Recreational Update. The camping season has seen high numbers across the state. At Elk Hill there was a 40% increase at the smaller Elk Hill Campground and a 102% increase in the Equestrian Group campground. She reported that the changes in the online reservation system for the smaller Elk Hill campground were successful in directing non-horse campers to the "people" campgrounds. She commended the equestrians for encouraging legal riding. There have been minimal reports of illegal riding.

The 2020 Equestrian Camping Policy was reviewed and no changes have been made.

Kelly will temporarily be taking a new position and Logan Graff will be the contact person for equestrian reservations.

There were reports this last summer of horse trailers being broken into and items stolen. Campers are encouraged to keep their rigs locked when absent from camp and to have those in camp to be watchful. If any problems occur calls or texts should be made to the RAP line (800-292-7800). Because non-horse campers frequently cruise through the group campground, Kerry Mase suggested that the gate to the group campground be closed after registered campers arrive (but not locked) to restrict access to non-campers.

Brian Mastenbrook is now the Northern Lower Peninsula Regional Wildlife Supervisor. Shelby Adams who is the Pigeon River Country Wildlife Biologist and will be attending the PRCEC meetings.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

February 22, 2023, 1:00 pm at the Roscommon DNR Office

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

Elk research report

Status of 6 connectors and Inspiration Point Trail Requests

Spring Work Bee planning

Solar Well location and funding for solar and hand pump wells

**ADJOURN:**

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Darlene Alexander and seconded by Natascha Graham. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 2:53 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerry K. Mase

Secretary