

Minutes of the Equine Trailways Subcommittee April 10, 2013

The regular meeting of the Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS) was called to order by Chair Sandra Batie at on April 10, 2013 at the Doherty Hotel in Clare, Michigan. The following members were present:

*Sandra Batie, Chair
Jan Herrick
Sarah Nicholls
Richard Kleinhardt
Joni Gleason*

Members unable to attend:

Michael Foote

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: Debbie Jensen, Annamarie Bauer, Parks and Recreation Division (PRD), and Earl Flegler, Wildlife Division.

Members of the public in attendance: Attachment 1

WELCOME

Chair Batie welcomed everyone and reviewed meeting protocol; introductions followed.

AGENDA

Several items were added to the Agenda: Bald Mountain, Trolz Property, Gladwin Field Trial Area, the Land Management Plan, Superior Heartland and future agenda items.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of the February 20, 2012 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Kleinhardt moved to approve the February 20 Minutes of the Equine Trailways Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Herrick and it carried unanimously.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES There were none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Batie provided the following updates.

Bald Mountain Recreation Area – Equine interest has been expressed. There are three primary recreation facilities with equine trails/use that are currently not connected, Addison Oaks, Paint Creek Trail and the Polly Ann Trail. .

Clear Lake State Park -Located north of Atlanta, MI due east of the Pigeon River Country State Forest (PRCSF). The State Park can be modified to include an equine campground with access to modern facilities and non-equestrian recreation. Currently the local riders (e.g. Alpena riders) are working with the DNR to identify enough equestrian trails from the state park to justify the campground modern equestrian..

Troltz Property - an offer has been made however the current owners have not yet accepted the offer. **DNR Land Management Plan** – Mr. Flegler distributed the press release announcing the DNR schedule for regional public input meetings concerning the draft Land Use Management plan. There are nine scheduled open house type meetings planned. Chair Batie indicated she has read the plan, feels it was well done and shared some of the equine plan elements with the group.

Governor's Showcase Trail – Ms. Bauer explained the intent is primarily for a hike bike trail(s). It is not intended for equine use. The route may include portions of mixed use trails (such as the North Central State Trail) that would allow horse use.

OLD BUSINESS / STAFF REPORTS

A. Parks and Recreation Updates - Debbie Jensen

- **Sleepy Hollow State Park Trail Request** - There has been a request for a new trail on the north ridge. DNR staff is evaluating the request and the entire trail system. Consideration is being given to repurposing underutilized trails. Staff is concerned about density issues. There has been no final decision.
- **Highland Park Trail Request** - DNR staff and Chair Batie are looking into why the trail proposal request was denied. There may be a way to incorporate this request into the North-South, East West connectors which are funded and being implemented.
- **Brighton Recreation Area Campground/Water Request** – There are non-level campsites and disconnected water system per the Health Department. The Brighton Trail Riders Association would like to explore a better camping situation and to have an easier method of registering for camping on site. Staff is looking into necessary changes and repairs. **Island Lake Recreation Area** – DNR is currently working on the management plan. Equine use has been raised for the first time. There is a question concerning the shared use of the tunnel with mountain bikes and the heavy public use of this park.

B. Comprehensive Statewide Trail Plan (CSTP) Update - Annamarie Bauer

The Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC) will be receiving the latest CSTP DRAFT at their July 9, 2013 meeting. Once MSTAC has received and approved the CSTP DRAFT, it will be placed on the Natural Resources Commission July Agenda for information. It will then be sent to the DNR Director for approval in August. There are equestrian recommendations in the appendices and in Chapter 4.

C. Response to Ron Olson April 5, 2013 Letter– Chair Batie

There are currently two major trail proposal processes. There was concern expressed by the ETS regarding consistency and the need for standardization. There is no specific timeline to address this issue. Ms. Jensen clarified that requested changes would only apply to trails in State Parks and not for other developments such as campgrounds.

MOTION: Mr. Kleinhardt moved to prepare a response to Ron Olson. The motion was seconded by Ms. Herrick, and it carried unanimously

NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentations

PRD Park Planning Process - Ms. Jensen provided presentations (attachments 2 and 3).

Chair Batie asked if there was an appeal process for denied trail proposal requests. The answer was no formal process. There was expressed concern by the ETS for an appeal process and the need for members of the public to be able to access portions of the proposal system for information.

Recreation Trail Proposal Process - Ms. Bauer provided an overview of the process for motorized trails and pathways on Forest Lands (attachment 4).

B. Draft of EQ “Requests for Projects” List - Chair Batie asked that ETS members keep her apprised of any request for equine projects from riding associations and friends groups.

C. EQ Communication Strategy News Notes - Chair Batie

The associations list is being used for communication with equine riding associations. The communication will convey ETS related information and facts.

D. Future Agenda Items for August 28, 2013 Chair Batie suggested the following:

- Friends Group Discussion (Friends Group Summit scheduled for May 3 and 4)
- Funding issues

The next Equine Trailways Subcommittee Meeting: Wednesday, August 28, 2013, at Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Lansing.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Larry Kleinhardt – thanked the ETS for all their work. He believed that the ETS was in existence because of in the Pigeon River Country State Forest and that progress was being made both in the PRCSF and in the rest of the state.

David Brooks, Hungerford Trail Riders Association– provided updates on growth of the group, funds raised, miles of new trail and total trail noting that they have provided \$300,000 in man hours and improvements. He indicated that they are looking for grants. Their membership is \$25.

Connie Kleinhardt – Meetings are taking place between Chuck Fanslow (President of the Michigan Trail Riders Association and local DNR staff with respect to equestrian use of the Gladwin area.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM.

Attachment 1 Sign-in Sheet ETS April 10, 2013 Meeting

Attachment 2 State Park and Recreation General Management Planning

Attachment 3 Project Development Process for State Park and Recreation Areas

Attachment 4 Recreation Trail Proposal Process