

Minutes of the  
Equine Trails Subcommittee  
November 21, 2013

The regular meeting of the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) was called to order by Chair Sandra Batie on November 21, 2013 at the Doherty Hotel, 604 N. McEwan, Clare, Michigan. The following members were present:

Chair Sandra Batie  
Gabrielle Hume  
Richard Kleinhardt  
Joni Gleason

Absent Members:

Mike Foote  
Sarah Nicholls

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: Jim Radabaugh, Matt Lincoln, Darlene Moore, Miguel Rodriguez and Earl Flegler.

**WELCOME**

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

Mike Foote will be contacted by telephone for any votes that may take place.

**AGENDA**

Approval of the August 28, 2013 Meeting Minutes

**MOTION:** Dick Kleinhardt moved to approve the August 28, 2013 minutes of the ETs. The motion was seconded by Joni Gleason and was unanimously approved.

Approval of November 21, 2013 Agenda

**MOTION:** Gabrielle Hume moved approval of the November 21, 2013 agenda and Dick Kleinhardt seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE:**

Joan Duncan on the UP Trail Riders spoke about a vision for a cross UP trail as well as proposed campgrounds. She was concerned that the proposed campground at the Marquette Fairgrounds which is to connect to Thunder Valley trail involved crossing a dangerous road.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Jim Radabaugh reviewed the new ETS Appointments. Dick Kleinhardt was re-appointed. Gabrielle Hume was appointed to the position representing the Southeast Lower Peninsula. He noted there was a formal DNR letter of thanks to retiring ETS member Jan Herrick.

**MOTION:** Dick Kleinhardt moved that the ETS send a letter of thanks to Jan Herrick as well. Gabrielle Hume seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jim Radabaugh discussed EQ several related issues.

- **MSTAC Future:** MSTAC will be continuing and member's terms are proposed to be staggered.
- **DNR Implementation Plan:** The State Trails Implementation Plan draft was distributed. This Plan highlights implementation priorities of the MSTAC Comprehensive Trail Plan. It will be presented at the next Natural Resources Committee meeting for final approval. Mr. Radabaugh noted that this document will be a guide to DNR trail investments and activities in the future.
- **Public Land Strategy Status:** The Public Land Strategy has been completed and is now before the legislature.
- **PRD Trail Proposal Objective:** Meetings with department staff have occurred. Changes/fixes are ongoing with the trail proposal database and PRD trail GPS data will be reviewed and corrected in order to fulfill this objective.
- **CIS Equine Trail Planning:** The Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Rail Trail project is 42 miles long. Grant funding and construction/bidding is scheduled to begin in 2014. A second project includes a parallel equestrian trail that is approximately 28 miles and runs from Owosso to Pewamo. The projected cost for the equestrian trail is about \$238,000.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### Election of Vice-Chair.

Chair Batie discussed that the duties of Vice Chair are to substitute as Chair when the Chair is unavailable. Chair Batie noted there is no presumption that the Vice Chair will automatically become the Chair in the event that the Chair position is vacant.

Chair Batie telephoned Mike Foote at 2:30 p.m. for the agenda item: election of Vice-Chair and then opened the floor for nominations: Mike Foote nominated Joni Gleason. There were no additional nominations, and Chair Batie moved to close the nominations.

**MOTION:** Chair Batie then moved to approve the election of Joni Gleason as Vice Chair. Dick Kleinhardt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### Presentation of Friends Agreements and Discussion of the Globe Building

Miguel Rodriguez made a presentation about the Outdoor Adventure and Discover Center (i.e., The Globe Building) as to what it will offer and the progress and status of the

building. He presented sketches and drawings of what the building is expected to feature. The goal is to have the building open to public in the spring of 2014.

Mr. Rodriguez confirmed that the DNR would be managing Belle Isle in Detroit. More details about that transition would be forthcoming.

Mr. Rodriguez explained that an official “Friends Group” is one that is a 501c3 organization that supports a DNR/PRD park and/or recreation area (which could include a trail or waterway if part of DNR site specific property) and which has signed the Friends Agreement. There are instances where some locations have several “Friends Groups”. Friends Groups can consist of an informal group of volunteers, a group that is in the process of becoming a 501c3, or a group that is starting a group. While groups will not be required to sign the agreement, a signed or forthcoming Friends agreement, or some other document showing cooperation between the group and the park/recreation area will be a requirement for applying for the Partnership Match Program.

The next Friends Summit is 2/28-3/01/2014 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center (RAM Center). The Friends Agreement has been revised as some changes have been made since it was first presented. Chair Batie thanked Mr. Rodriguez, but noted that some issues remain with the wording of the draft Friends Agreement. She plans to form a “subgroup” to make recommendations to Mr. Rodriguez about how the Friends Agreement could be changed so that it works better for EQ associations. Also the subgroup would like to work with Mr. Rodriguez to identify which situations are applicable to Friends Agreements. Mr. Rodriguez indicated that would be welcome.

#### Pigeon River Country State Forest and Upper Lower Peninsula

Dick Kleinhardt combined a report of the PRCSF Equine Committee which he chairs with updates about the upper Lower Peninsula region which he represents on the ETS. Mr. Kleinhardt provided pictures of the upgrades and remaining promised facility and trail improvements in the PRCSF. He also stated that a formal list of EQ requests from the PRCEC committee will be prepared at the next meeting with the intent to send the list to Director Creagh. The Director had requested this list.

He discussed a recent ticket given for illegal horse riding in the PRCSF as well as the interest of some riders in gaining access to the Green Timbers area in the PRCSF. He noted that this region did not have the complications of being purchased by state license fee funds or by Pittman -Robertson or Dingell Johnson funds.

Mr. Kleinhardt relayed a report from Chuck Fanslow of the Gladwin Field Trail Area (GFTA) Friends Group that there has been a formal request made to Jason Hartman, Unit Manager of the GFTA. The request is for a trail exit/entrance from the SE corner of the approved equine riding area to the corner of Hilts and Oberlin roads. According to Mr. Fanslow, the trail would solve a safety issue. The request is to have this connection, if approved, completed by summer.

Mr. Kleinhardt then discussed that, since there has been a problem in locating enough riding trails next to Clear Lake State Park to make the development of a campground attractive, attention has turned to the possibility of reopening Big Oaks Campground for horse camping and riding. The Alpena Riders, some of whom were in the public audience and who added details, noted that the investigation into this possibility is in early stages.

**MOTION:** At the suggestion of Chair Batie, Gabrielle Hume moved that an ETS letter of support for the concept of Big Oaks be sent to the DNR (Anna Sylvester and Ron Olson). Dick Kleinhardt seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

### The Upper Peninsula

Joni Gleason discussed a UP trail in the Negaunee/Ishpeming area. At the last ETS meeting, Ms. Gleason mentioned that there was DNR approval for monies of signs for 22 miles on the Iron Ore Heritage Trail in Marquette County where horses may share the trail. So far no signs have been posted because one township did not support the millage increase for the trail, and other portions await some private lease agreements. There are also issues of keeping full sized vehicles from using the trail. Ms. Gleason also mentioned that there are places on the Iron Ore Heritage Trail where horses are not allowed, but there are alternative trails—but signs will be crucial. There are no funds for these signs as of yet. Members of Superior Heartland Horse Trails are seeking support for appropriate signage as well as obtaining cities' support of more equestrian trails. She noted the manager of the City of Negaunee is supportive of developing equestrian trails - he has already placed a hitching post for horses in the city park and has agreed to place a bigger picket high-line for riders next summer. Local DNR local professionals have also been quite helpful, along with the area's rodeo (Great Lakes Rodeo) - they have agreed to share their non-profit status with the friends group in any grant proposal project. The friends group is also working closely with the local mountain bike group to share and sign the trails.

**MOTION:** Dick Klienhardt moved that a letter of support by ETS to the appropriate persons (e.g. City Manager, Jeff Thornton and City of Ishpeming). The motion was seconded by Joni Gleason. Chair Batie asked that Ms. Gleason work with her on the appropriate wording of the letter and who it should be addressed to.

### The Southeast Lower Peninsula

Gabrielle Hume noted that she was appointed by Director Keith Creagh to develop a committee. The committee—**Tuscola and Lapeer Committee**—was then to recommend possibilities for enhancement of equestrian trails and facilities in Tuscola, Lapeer, Genesee and Huron Counties. Ms. Hume handed out a packet on this region's EQ possibilities. Although there are campgrounds/trails in Genesee County (e.g. The Elba

Equestrian Center in Elba, Mi). there are no campgrounds or equestrian trails in the “thumb” area of Michigan. Ms. Hume also noted that while Elba Equestrian Center has adequate trails, the camping is poor. She noted that there are challenges in this area. For example, obtaining trails may require “land swaps’ of state license fee or Pittman Robertson lands for other DNR property. Ms Hume stated that while she and her committee now have a better idea of possibilities, she would like advice on how to proceed. Jim Radabaugh stated that DNR’s Fish and Wildlife needs to be involved in any next steps because these areas identified are state game recreation. Chair Batie said that a meeting of representatives of Ms. Hume committee with appropriate DNR staff should be arranged. Mr. Radabaugh said he would help with arranging such a meeting.

Ms. Hume handed out a document on the “Friends of the Trolley Line Trail North” which she obtained from equestrian Bill Nelson. The undated note stated that the group obtained \$670,000 from the Mi Dept of Transportation and while the group is raising more money, they expect to see surveying begin for the trail in Spring 2014. The trail will run from the Birch Run Outlet malls to the south Saginaw County Line and then connect to the already completed Genesee County/Vienna Township system. Ms. Hume was looking for direction on how to proceed on developing this area because this could be a private area. The committee suggested more information would be needed before it was obvious what steps should be taken.

#### DNR Staff Reports.

Jim Radabaugh announced the Annual Trail Summit (Implementing Michigan’s Comprehensive Trail Plans) will be taking place in Traverse City at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, Michigan on January 21 from 9-4 pm. The Summit will be part of the Michigan Recreation and Park Association annual program from January 20-24.

Matt Lincoln discussed the process of how riding associations should proceed with desired EQ projects:

1. Present the proposed project to your local unit supervisor/manager for park projects or your local trail analyst for forest recreation projects.
- 2A, For parks and recreation areas, the unit supervisor/manager then submits a Work Item Proposal (WIP) to the DNR planners to get the project approved (This submitted proposal does not guarantee funding.)
- 2B. In the case of forest recreation projects, the trail analyst will submit a Recreation Trail Development Proposal (Trail Proposal) in partnership with the riding association for approval. (This submitted proposal does not guarantee funding.)
2. DNR then seeks capital outlay priority lists from each Division Field Operations District annually. Priority projects are typically selected from the approved WIP and Trail Proposal lists that align with current DNR planning documents.
3. ETS establishes an annual priority list for proposed equestrian projects for the next year in spring of current year. This should be a priority list of those WIP and Recreation Trail Proposals previously approved as aligning with current DNR planning documents.

4. This ETS priority list will then be communicated to the district supervisors in order to align the district priorities with ETS priorities.
5. The annual ETS priority list and the capital outlay priority list will then be used by the DNR, riding associations, and the ETS to direct fundraising.

Dick Kleinhardt asked Matt Lincoln is there was a list available with dollar amounts allocated for different areas/project. Matt said that he believes there is such a document and he would check on it and provide it to the ETS committee.

#### Public Appearance

Joan Duncan of the UP Trail Riders provided two comments to Matt Lincoln to take to the appropriate DNR staff. These comments had been put on a Trail Development Proposal Form. One comment/proposal dealt with the Thunder Valley Horse Camping. The proposal is that the existing parking lot (Blueberry Pathways #2 be expanded from April to October to include horse camping, parking, and trail development and be linked to the Thunder Valley Trails via old CR 553 and CR NI. The second proposal, from the Superior Heartland Horse Trail Association is to provide a sign to clarify that horse camping is allowed at the Canada Lakes Parking lot during the summer months and develop access to existing horse trails.

Chair Batie adjourned the meeting @ 4:36 p.m.