

**Minutes of the
Equine Trails Subcommittee
July 25, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) was called to order by Chairman Mike Foote on July 25, 2018 at 1:22 p.m. at the MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Lansing. Members present were: *Chairman Mike Foote, Dick Kleinhardt, Kristie Walls, and Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf.* Janet Holmstrom joined via telephone.

The following Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff was present: *Paul Yauk, Barbara Graves, Anna Sylvester, Earl Flegler, and Elissa Buck.* Greg Kinser, Scott Slavin, and Paige Perry joined via telephone.

Guests: *Connie Kleinhardt, BCHM; Caryn Robinson and Susie Sulla, PLHA; Jenny Cook* joined via telephone.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Kristie Walls moved the motion to approve the July 25, 2018 amended meeting agenda. Dick Kleinhardt seconded and the agenda was approved unanimously.

Dick Kleinhardt moved to approve the March 8, 2018 meeting minutes. Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Committee Member Reports

Janet Holmstrom - Upper Peninsula

- Pike Lake (Houghton Co)/Simar trail (Ontonagon Co): DNR and MI-TRALE met to GPS the proposed trail at Pike Lake and the proposal is being written.
- Courtney Lake Campground (Ontonagon Co): MI-TRALE & USDA/Ottawa National Forest (ONF) will meet 7/25/18 regarding the recommendation of opening a few campsites at the Courtney Lake campground to horses.
- Pine Bowl (Chippewa Co.): The DNR would like to improve the parking area. Paul Gaberdiel is working with a local rider on it.
- The Marquette Co. fairgrounds connector trail to Thunder Valley: the goal for this year is to get the brushing and signage completed.
- DNR Workshop: The DNR/USDA National Forest Equestrian Workshop was held on 3/17 in Ishpeming. There was a large turn out with good conversation and questions. Many thanks to Jeff Kakuk and the DNR for facilitating the workshop in the UP.
- Pony Express Trail Ride across the UP: The UP MTRA is currently doing a trail ride across the UP. The distance is 309 miles from Sault Ste. Marie to Ironwood.
- Ontonagon Township Park: Recently some folks drove 4 hours to camp at the park and unfortunately there were some misunderstandings. Other campers called the DNR twice on them when they rode their horses in Lake Superior. The conservation officer told them it was against the law. The township called Janet asking for clarification and to attend their next meeting. Is there a legal reference she can give them regarding what is legal for horses and the great lakes? Paul Yauk will check with department staff.

Kristie Walls – Central Lower Peninsula

- No trail information from the Central region due to all requests being stopped at stewardship because of density issues. Beach riding opportunities are evolving.
- Fort Custer proposal # 018 is going through the process for an equine campground, but due to folks being off work, they are not hearing back where it is in the process.
- Ionia has installed a pavilion and will be building a rail structure around it. They have roughed in a new Skills Course that wraps around the campground. A team from Michigan Rehabilitative Services has spent a few weeks clearing brush and beginning the obstacle build process. Photos will be supplied.
- Sleepy Hollow continues doing trail maintenance. The park itself has made 5 walk in campsites for hikers, boaters, or equestrians.
- Yankee Springs is adding corrals to two more campsites, totaling seven now with wooden corrals. They are also seeking grants for electricity in the horsemen's camp.
- The Lost Horse Procedure (attached) is flexible enough to be modified for each trail location. They are proposing the document be individualized for each location and posted at each trail head. They would also like each land manager to have a copy with their own local information.
- Beach Ride at Muskegon State Park (see attached) will be held on September 22nd, sponsored by Back Country Horsemen of Michigan. They plan to accept registrations until August 25, or until they get 75 riders. Currently, they have 18 registrations. The event will be included in both Saddle Up and Equine Times August issues.

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf – Southeastern Lower Peninsula

Brighton Rec

- New staging area on Chambers Road is partially completed; approach drive to the staging area needs grading. No mowing of staging area allowed because of the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake protected zone. No hitching posts, vault toilets, etc. yet but facility could still be used if approach drive was made safe.
- Discussion taking place at board meetings of the current staging area sign-in system. They are questioning if the system serves a purpose. Paul Yauk said they are interested in their impact and would like the data.
- Water supply – they have been told by Mike Donnelly that DEQ is demanding that the yurt be supplied with a well and pump, using money intended for the well and pump in the equestrian campground. Anna Sylvester said to work with Nikki; Mike should discuss with Murdock.

Highland Trail Riders – HTRA May event was very successful. Preparing for the September event. They plan to organize a work bee in late August. Working with the DNR on the approved pavilion project. They expect the pavilion with picnic tables and grill to be completed next year.

Maybury Trail Riders

- The MTR 2018 Destination Ride turned out fantastic. They registered 25 riders and gained two new members.
- Had issues with bike riders using a horse only entrance into the park and horses were being spooked. Supervisor Traci Sincok has had conservation officers visit the park to monitor. Until an appropriate entrance/trail can be developed at the west side of the park for cyclists and pedestrians, the Napier Road Equestrian entrance gate will be secured beginning June 11 with the pass code only available to equestrian riders that register their information with the park office.

Pinckney – Blessing of the Horse camping weekend went very well. Spring work bee was rained out. They have put in many volunteer trail work hours and hired some of the trail work done this year.

Pontiac Lake Horsemen – August 18th is the In the Pink Derby, a fundraiser for those that cannot afford mammograms at St. Joe's Hospital. It is a horse show, 100% fundraiser, put on by the Huron Valley Equestrian Committee. Pontiac Lake Horsemen Assoc. contributed \$1,020, volunteers, and is also providing the volunteer t-shirts. For more information, contact PLHA.

Proud Lake Trail Riders – Marking the trails is a go and the goal is for it to be done this fall or next spring.

Dick Kleinhardt – Northern Lower Peninsula

- Many positive things taking place particularly with regards to Tin Cup Springs campground by Luther, Michigan. Scott Slavin is submitting the proposal electronically. He will continue to keep everyone informed of progress.
- Progress in Pigeon River Country continues to move forward. Chuck Fanslow, Brian Mastenbrook and he walked to Inspiration Point to view possible access routes and arrived at a decision. Next step is a Land Use Order by the Director. Approval of a Pavilion has been granted. Chuck Fanslow, as chair of the PRCEC, is heading up this task of now receiving bids etc. They are anxiously awaiting all inquiries.
- Back Country Horsemen of Michigan (BCHMI) hosted a work bee at the Pigeon in May and much was accomplished with 35 volunteers over the course of 4 days. Back Country also joined forces with MTRA for their work bee at South Branch where much was accomplished from general clean up, stump grinding, adding additional picket posts, York raking, skid-steer work with grapple bucket and much more.
- Dick thanked Jenny Cook, Kristie Walls, and Elissa Buck for arranging the Beach Pilot ride for September. BCHMI is proud to be able to host it and showcase the beaches as additional riding opportunities to boost tourism in the state.
- Big Oaks - former Friends Group decided to vacate the campground and their friend's agreement because of P.A. 288. Alpena Horsemen's Association just voted to take over this responsibility and adopt this camp and trails. The ultimate goal is to create more single-track trails in this area.

Mike Foote – Southwestern Lower Peninsula

Has had no contact with anyone. Has not heard anything on the long-distance riding. MTAC meeting was this week and there are two new appointments; Bob Wilson and Steve Davis, non-motorized representatives.

Paul Yauk said they are taking a lot of questions on P.A. 288. They have inventoried over 7,000 miles of roads on state land, opening over 5,500 miles; they are still collecting data. Anna Sylvester and Earl Flegler gave an update on where they are at with the inventory. More information can be found at www.michigan.gov/forestreads.

Janet Holmstrom inquired about the Horse Council survey and if has been published. Chair Foote will send it to everyone if it is completed.

UPDATES

Staff Updates

Greg Kinser, Northern Lower Trails Coordinator, introduced himself to the group and said he is happy to be working in his new capacity in the Trails Section and is looking forward to meeting everyone he has not met yet. He is working hard to acclimate himself to the all the programs and projects.

Scott Slavin, Cadillac Trail Specialist, reported on the progress of the proposed Tin Cup Springs campground and trail in Lake County. Discussions have been held on the location and needs for the campground, size, funding, roles of the equine folks and PRD staff, and user conflicts. A nearby undesignated trail will be incorporated into the proposal. They are looking at 24 sites, with a common area in the middle. Management and day to day operations have been discussed. A local group is interested in maintenance. Internally, he has met with the different divisions. He is seeking some local public input. They will need a letter of support from the county, as well as the local ORV groups, for the trail. It will be entered into the database this week or next week for approvals.

Paige Perry, Gaylord Trail Specialist reported that the Stoney Creek area trail proposal was approved with modifications. They will get with the group that has volunteered to do the maintenance. There is a possibility for a group camp north of Cheboygan, off of old Mackinaw Road. Along with the campground proposal being reviewed, they will also be reviewing an official connector from Stoney Creek to that campground. Eventually, the second phase will be to find a spot to park or stage in Mackinac City. The Michigan Trail Riders Association is doing a big work bee.

Greg Kinser reported that the Four Mile Road Campground is looking well after the hazard tree removal. The grass has grown and there is a significant amount of leaf cover.

Paul Yauk and Anna Sylvester updated the committee on the flooding in Houghton County and the efforts that are in place to repair the damage. Janet Holmstrom said staff is doing a phenomenal job.

Elissa Buck and Jenny Cook gave an update on the Great Lakes Shoreline Riding pilots. They looked at all the State Parks along the shore lines and based on some of the criteria given to them, talking to Stewardship and field staff, they came up with six potential locations (see attached reports).

ACTION ITEMS

Letter of Support for Tin Cup Springs – Chair Foote said he sent a letter in the mail. He asked if they can do an email, to which Paul Yauk said yes, they could, but they are well along in the review process and does not think they need one. Chair Foote asked if they needed a letter of support to the county and Anna Sylvester said yes, so that they are okay with them using the county roads as part of the access to trails; this should come from the locals and sent to Scott Slavin so he can add it to the proposal.

Letters of support for Pike Lake and Simar – The Simar campground is off the table, per Anna. Janet specified that the letter of recommendation request is for the Simar trails project. Anna said that both support letters should be sent to Jeff Kakuk, Western U.P. Trail Specialist.

Paul Yauk updated the committee that a recommendation was submitted to the director for a Tourism Representative.

Please send agenda items to Chair Foote and Barb Graves. The next meeting is October 17 , 2018 at the Doherty Hotel in Clare.

Kristie Walls moved the motion to adjourn the meeting. Dick Kleinhardt seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Suggested Procedures for Lost trail horse/mule.

All precautions to maintain control of your horse/mule should be exercised at all times. Though horses/mules are usually herd bound animals this is not always the case. Remember that you are financially responsible for damage to personal property that your horse/mule incurs. A fresh horse/mule is best trained at home in a controlled environment they are comfortable with. A strange area and an unexperienced horse/mule can lead to some uncontrolled experiences. We have attempted to list some helpful procedures in the unfortunate instance that your trail horse/mount becomes lost to you.

- 1: Once all attempts to re-establish control of your equine have been exhausted.
- 2: Notify Land Manager/Park Supervisor (insert name) @ (insert phone #) of where, when and circumstances of lost trail horse/mule. Give a full description of your lost horse/mule, with any brands or special markings. Share your contact information.
- 3: Notify local police authorities, Sheriff (insert county, & phone #), State Police (insert phone #) or dial 911 if a human emergency exists.
- 4: Leave your contact information with all authorities as well as at any information Kiosk stations.
- 5: Working with local authorities, and only with their permission, organize a search.

Suggested procedure for Found trail horse/mule.

Remember that a trail horse/mule lost from their rider will likely be startled, scared, and confused of their surroundings.

- 1: If you can gain control of the lost animal, stop and tie them securely while the rider is located.
- 2: If no control is attainable note the time, place and description of the animal, and general direction it was traveling, report immediately to the land manager / park supervisor as above.



Back Country Horsemen Michigan

A 501©3 Non-Profit Organization

Beach Ride at Muskegon State Park

September 22, 2018



You're Invited!!

Back Country Horsemen Michigan (BCHMI) is hosting a beach ride at Muskegon State Park as part of a pilot program with the Michigan DNR. The purpose of the ride is to evaluate equestrian use and facility impact to the natural resources along this section of beach. This ride will be part of the DNR's overall evaluation process to determining how to manage this recreational use while balancing the natural resources at the designated locations across the state.

All riders must be Back Country Horsemen Michigan members and must PRE-REGISTER by August 25, 2018. A form for both is attached.

Once registration forms are received, depending on the number of riders, time slots will be assigned ranging from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. If you have friends you wish to ride with, there is a space on the registration form for both of you to make this request. We will do our best to put you together. Assigned time slot and recommended route information will be sent via email by September 9.

Riders will meet at the northern most beach parking lot of Muskegon State Park. BCHMI will be there to organize the parking and the ride. Space is limited, so please arrive no more than one hour before scheduled start time and please leave within one hour of completion to accommodate the next group of riders.

Donations to Back Country Horsemen of Michigan are always gratefully accepted. There are big projects coming along this year with a pavilion in the works at Elk Hill Group Campground, and a proposed horse campground on the Tin Cup Springs Trail being planned.

Your help is greatly appreciated!!