

**DRAFT Minutes of the  
Equine Trails Subcommittee  
October 17, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) was called to order by Chairman Mike Foote on October 17, 2018 at 1:15 p.m. at the Doherty Hotel in Clare. 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: *Nikki Van Bloem, Barbara Graves, Anna Sylvester, Earl Flegler, and Elissa Buck.* Paige Perry joined via telephone.

Guests: *Connie Kleinhardt, Back Country Horsemen; Jenny Cook, Back Country Horsemen; Lynne Noll, Back Country Horsemen; Deanna Stamp, Back Country Horsemen; Heide MacDonald, Alpena Club and Rocky Mountain Horse Club; Bonnie Cornelius, Back Country Horsemen; Darlene Alexander, Back Country Horsemen, Pigeon River Country Equestrian Club, and Alpena County Horsemen's Club.*

## **BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

Dick Kleinhardt moved to approve the July 25, 2018, amended Page 5, meeting minutes. Kristie Walls seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Dick Kleinhardt moved the motion to approve the October 17, 2018 amended meeting agenda with the addition of the Big Oaks Update and to move Staff Updates before Committee Member Reports under Business Items for Discussion. Kristie Walls seconded and the agenda was approved unanimously.

### Staff Updates

Nikki stated that they are continuing to work with the executive office on replacements for Sarah, Janet, and Mike, and thanked the members for staying on until replacements were found. She suggested the subcommittee select a chair. Dick suggested they elect a vice chair as well. The subcommittee would like to wait until the vacancies and replacements come on board first. Items will be put on next meeting agenda.

Kristie said her term is up in November and there has been no communication with her from the department on if the department wants her to stay, or if there would be a replacement sought for her seat. She thinks it is somewhat derelict and that communication should happen. Nikki asked her if she would like to continue serving. Kristie is undecided at this time but willing to see how things go.

## Committee Member Reports (Attached)

### Big Oaks Update

Heide MacDonald, Darlene Alexander, and Bonnie Cornelius spoke on a trail proposal for Big Oaks that would connect all the existing trails that are there, many of which are dead-ends not used by ORVs. It would make a single-track loop system that would allow many options for riders and would give riders an opportunity to get off the roads and away from ORVs. They want to see the campground grow and believe these trails would bring more there to camp. They did not have actual miles, but think it is a four hour ride.

Paige Perry said it is within the Atlanta Management Unit, which is general state forest land and the activity that they are proposing is already allowed, they would just be asking for it to be designated, but she asked them to be cognizant that it should be palatable to everybody. She asked that their plans be sent to the park manager, unit manager, and her.

### 2019 Meeting Dates

Discussion was had on 2019 ETS meeting dates and tentative dates were set for the last Wednesday of every month prior to the months the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) meets, including a January meeting. A firm date was set for January 30, 2019. Proposed dates are March 27, June 26, and Sep 25 of 2019.

Chair Foote asked the subcommittee members if there were any action items they wanted on the January agenda. New subcommittee appointments and the selection of a new chair and vice chair were requested. It was also requested to add the shoreline riding surveys.

## **UPDATES**

Great Lakes Shoreline Riding – Elissa Buck gave an update on the pilot ride survey results (report attached). She said the Backcountry Horsemen did an amazing job sponsoring the event. The biggest question she got from non-equestrians was if the manure was going to be picked up. Jenny Cook said she checked with other states on how they do manure removal; most of the people said it is washed away (Atlantic and Pacific), but on the Great Lakes, we would have to pick it up. Other states, they want it picked up, so they charge riders to pay staff to pick it up. She thinks most equestrians would pay the extra cost to help in cleanup.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Great Lakes Shoreline Riding - Jenny Cook started by thanking the DNR for cooperating with the pilot rides and to Elissa Buck who greeted each visitor and made the experience informative for everyone, inviting everyone to be a participant. She thanked Greg Sherburn and other staff for clearing the sand off the parking lot and monitoring the event. She would like to thank the ETS, who she has been working with on this project for the past year. She thinks the subcommittee is important because it is an avenue for the public to create opportunities such as this. She thanked the Back

Country Horsemen, who came with supplies, treats, and volunteered (without their horses) to make sure everyone had a great time. She also thanked all the participants who followed all the guidelines, and also thanked the general public. She updated the group on the pilot rides (report attached) and the scheduled ride on November 3, sponsored by Grace Adventures.

Dick Kleinhardt wanted to give a heads-up about an article that was written by MTAC member Tim Kobasic regarding the MTAC and a pay-to-play proposal for non-motorized users brought forth by another MTAC member, Bob Wilson. Mr. Kleinhardt wants to emphasize how critically important it is for equestrians to keep track of volunteer hours, the only thing they have to show for what they are willing to do through sweat equity.

Jenny Cook relayed a few staff reports and key points that were given at the MTAC meeting to the subcommittee.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

## Committee Member Reports

### *Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf – Southeastern Lower Peninsula*

Brighton Rec – It was decided to wait until next year and new management to try to get projects such as water in the campground, new staging area moving forward again. The Brighton to Pinckney ride which takes riders down the Lakelands trail from Brighton Rec to Pinckney Rec. It is organized by both Brighton and Pinckney. Their Fall work bee is scheduled for this Saturday.

Maybury Trail Riders – They are in discussions with park management for better signage at the park for both equestrian trail users and signage which will clarify to cyclists the trails are horse use only as they are seeing bikes on some of the horse trails. A southern access point for the park was suggested also, open to cyclists and joggers. New Headquarters are being built away from the equestrian staging area which will take traffic away from the equestrian staging area and hopes are that this will include a cyclist staging area near the new headquarters.

Pinckney – Brighton to Pinckney ride went well and the Fall work bee is scheduled for this Sunday. PTRA hired quite a bit of trail work done this year and we still have plenty to keep us busy for this work bee too.

The PTRA president, Sue Armstrong, vice president, Dianne Martin and I were invited by the DNR to attend a meeting to discuss a plan with the Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative to pave up to and some of the unpaved portions of the Mike Levine Lakelands trail, creating a loop of paved trail geared towards bike use from Dexter to Chelsea to Stockbridge to Pinckney and back to Dexter. The Mike Levine Lakelands trail is a rail-to-trail trail and the portion in question is from Stockbridge to Pinckney. This is a non-motorized multi-use trail and sections of it which have been paved, in Hamburg and also Pinckney, have effectively pushed horse use to the wayside. Equestrians in the areas near these unpaved sections (which are now proposed for paving) utilize this trail for riding the trail itself, to ride from their homes to Pinckney Rec and to ride from town to town. We feel strongly that horses MUST be considered in any improvements to the trail and that paving will push the horses out. Putnam Township (just west of Pinckney village) greatly improved their trail with a gravel aggregate surface which is suitable for all users, plus it is low maintenance for the community and this is the type of improvement we recommended. Discussions will be on going with Nikki suggesting we meet again in a year with HWPI. Right now the trail is being built along M 52, between Chelsea and Stockbridge.

Proud Lake Trail Riders – Marking the trails is a go and goal is for it to be done next year. Their Circle ride between Kensington Metropark and Proud Lake was a huge success, included a camp out and was their largest turn out yet. They had ~ 30 campers and 50 horses on the ride!

Trail Towns – I was able to talk with Gregory and Stockbridge about the possibility of becoming trail towns. Their supervisors both said it was something that had been discussed but had not moved forward due to cost. I will get in touch with the townships and villages over the winter to see if any are interested in looking into it again. I believe riders do really enjoy destination riding and this would promote towns and the Lakelands trail to many more riders.

*Kristie Walls – Central Lower Peninsula*

Volunteer Hours – n/a - requested from region parks a couple of weeks ago.

Horse people in my region have primarily been busy putting on various fundraising events at each park and trying to encourage park and trail usage despite alternating hot and wet weather since mid-summer.

ETS, the DNR, and Back Country Horsemen of Michigan had a very successful Pilot Public Beach Ride at Muskegon on September 22. Jenny Cook has an excellent report on the topic so I will defer to her.

It's been no secret to this committee, I've been extremely frustrated at times with the interactions and outcomes of this committee. I spend my "day life" in a "get it done – now" environment. This makes it difficult to change gears to work with the methods of the Department of Natural Resources.

We meet only four times a year. If ETS is going to accomplish all that it was created to do, all that it really can do, there has to be a high level of accountability, communication, and integrity. Currently, things that should be clearly and forthrightly shared with the committee are held "close to the vest" as if they were top secret. Required Action Items from our minutes are allowed to be pushed forward to the next meeting again and again without challenge. I find this inefficient and wasteful of all our time, and in some cases intentionally opaque.

While I feel some good things have been accomplished over the last four years, such as opening connector trails back up in the Pigeon River area, defining equine only camping locations, and getting camping corrals allowed in our state parks, I had decided, prior to earlier discussions today, not to continue representing my region after November 1st. The personal stress and frustration that comes with this position out-weighs the reward derived from efforts made – at least for me. At this time, I would like to give it further consideration.

I realize this stress and frustration is as much caused by my personal need for urgency as it is by this committee's seeming lack of urgency – probably in equal parts. I also realize I don't want this stress in my life for the next four years. Perhaps my perspective will change in four or eight years, and if the committee wants me back at that time, I would give it my honest consideration. I would hope to find an agency, its committee, and its people willing to work with "civilian partners" with openness, honesty, and transparency.

*Mike Foote – Southwestern Lower Peninsula (from report to MTAC)*

The Courtney Lake Campground was to have a meeting with Michigan Trail and USDA Ottawa National Forest to discuss a recommendation of opening a few campsites at the campground. A proposal was put in for the Tin Cup Springs Campground. Extensive work bees have been completed in the Pigeon, hosted by Back Country Horsemen. Also worked with MTRA to clean up the South Branch Camp. Big Oaks has been abandoned by the previous friends group and the Alpena Horsemen's Association has stepped up to take over. Ionia has installed a pavilion. Sleepy Hollow continues to do trail maintenance and the park itself has made five walk-in campsites for hikers, boaters, or equestrians. Yankee Springs is adding corrals to two more campsites, for a total of seven. Fort Custer is working on process for an equine campground and a day staging area. They also replaced a bridge that was out in their camp. The Highland Trail Riders had a match grant with the DNR for a 20 x 30 pavilion and also looking at a proposal for electricity in the campground. Pontiac did a fundraiser for the Pink Derby and provided a lot of money and volunteer hours for it; it was a big success. The Michigan Horse Council delineated money to have the economic impact report for the horse industry as part of the overall study that the American Horse Council Foundation did (see attached). The Legislative Day of the Horse was put together by the Horse Council and due to the success of the program they are going to repeat it in 2019.

*Dick Kleinhardt – Northern Lower Peninsula*

**UPDATE TIN CUPS CAMP AND TRAIL PROPOSAL:**

This from Brad Slater: Received a phone call from Ms. Patti Pacola, Clerk of Lake County, informing me that she used the two example letters I attached to her and some online Equine Subcommittee info to create a letter of support for the Tin Cup Springs Equestrian Camp. She expects the Lake County Board to sign the letter on October 24, 2018. She'll call me on that day to inform me of the signing. The last report that I received from Scott Slavin is that all systems are a "GO"! Wildlife has signed off and everything has been entered into the system including the trails that have been GPS'd. Waiting now for weather to improve to start some small preliminary work in the camp area.

**UPDATE BIG OAKS:** Heidi MacDonald, native of Big Oaks, is here along with Darlene Alexander and Bonnie Cornelius to present what they have worked on with the trails and campground. GPS ing has been done and a proposal is in the works for some very nice single track trail connectors near camp. I would like these ladies to briefly discuss their progress on the Big Oaks Campground.

**UPDATE ON ELK HILL:** Pavilion plans are coming along. Site location is still under consideration. Blueprints have been drawn up and seal approved and paid for. Next step is permitting process through LARA must be done. We are in that phase now. Estimated costs for pavilion is approximately \$25,000 and to date we have a very impressive start (3/4s raised). These are funds raised exclusively from our equestrian community and friends. If you know of any groups or anyone who would like to see this project succeed then please forward monies to Back Country of Michigan who is collecting the funds for the project. This past Sunday, Chuck Fanslow and I traveled to the Pigeon to flag the new trail to Inspiration Point. We met with Deanna Stamp who GPS's the trail. Thank you also goes to Tom Stamp and Lynne Noll for also helping map out our route. The trail will start about half way between Clark Bridge Road and the North viewing area parking lot. It's a beautiful trail which stays for the most part on a high ridge in the woods. The trail proposal process can begin now according to Scott Whitcomb! This is an "iconic" area that Director Creagh promised us and want to personally thank him for keeping promise.

**UPDATE ON BEACH PILOT RIDE:** Hugely successful event. Special thanks to Elissa Buck who was a great host representing the DNR! Of course special thanks to Jenny Cook as well as to Kristie Walls who organized the event along with several of our Back Country Horsemen Michigan Board members who worked so hard the whole day. Back Country picked up 57 new members as a result of this event. This event will be showcased nationally through Back Country Horsemen of America. Great exposure for Michigan Equestrians!



## **ETS October UP Report.**

- Pike Lake (Houghton County)/Simar trail (Ontonagon Co): no change. The proposal is in process.
- Courtney Lake Campground (Ontonagon Co): Ottawa National Forest (ONF) is working on this internally. We hope to know more by Spring.
- Pine Bowl (Chippewa Co.): I have not had any updates on the status of this proposed parking area.
- The Marquette Co. fairgrounds connector trail to Thunder Valley: the brushing and signage have not yet been completed.
- Ontonagon Township Park: The township had called me asking for clarification. Paul was going to look into a legal reference I can give them regarding what is legal for horses and the great lakes.
- Connector trail from Lake Lakenenland to Marquette Fairgrounds: I have not heard an update on the status of this with the DNR? Are there any steps we need to be taking locally to get this project moving? Anna Sylvester and Nikki said they will check on it.
- Received an email from Norm Seppi regarding Headquarters Lake in Luce County that has never been completed. What is going on with this? Anna Sylvester replied that she did not know it was an issue and they will look in to it.
- I believe this is my last meeting as the DNR may have my replacement soon? I really enjoyed this committee and all the hard work and dedication to Michigan Horse trails brought to the table by everyone! Thank you all!!!
- PS: And just in case your curious, yes we have had snow already in the UP.

# Economic Impact of the Horse Industry

## IN MICHIGAN



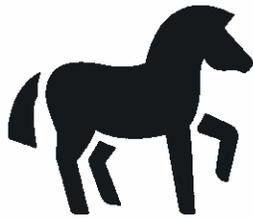
Total Value  
Added to the  
Michigan  
Economy:  
**\$1.6 billion**

Total  
Employment  
Impact:  
**30,739  
Jobs**



Direct  
Contribution  
to GDP:  
**\$893 million**

Direct  
Employment  
Impact:  
**22,068  
Jobs**



**188,865** horses in Michigan- making it  
the **the twelfth largest state** in  
terms of horse population

Horse Ownership, Equine Institutions &  
Profit Making Organizations, and Tourism  
Spending by Participants and Spectators  
combine for a

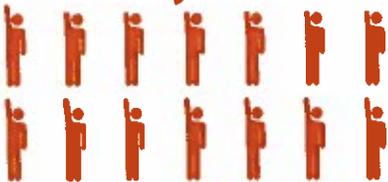


**\$2.6 billion  
economic impact**



In total, **30.5%** of  
households—or  
**1.2 million in Michigan**—  
contain horse enthusiasts.

**50,000**



Number of Michigan residents  
volunteering their time for  
horse-related activities.

**628,000**

acres of land in  
Michigan used  
for horse-related  
purposes.



## ECONOMIC IMPACT The Racing Sector



supports  
**3,946 jobs**



adds **\$252 million**  
in value to the  
state economy



Racing Sector  
Total Economic  
Impact of:  
**\$389 million**

## ECONOMIC IMPACT The Competition Sector



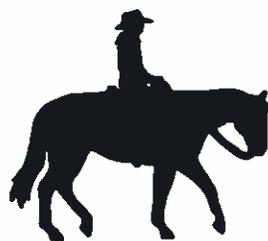
supports  
**11,942 jobs**



adds **\$591 million**  
in value to the state  
economy

Competition  
Sector  
Total Economic  
Impact of:  
**\$1 billion**

## ECONOMIC IMPACT The Recreation Sector



supports  
**6,677 jobs**



adds **\$321 million**  
in value to the state  
economy

Recreation Sector  
Total Economic  
Impact of:  
**\$539 million**

## ECONOMIC IMPACT Equine Therapy



supports  
**196 jobs**

adds **\$8.43 million**  
in value to the  
state economy



## ECONOMIC IMPACT Equine Rescues & Sanctuaries



supports  
**17 jobs**



adds  
**\$700,000**  
in value to the  
state economy



Information provided by  
the American Horse Council  
Foundation. Copyright 2017.

# Shoreline Horseback Riding - Participant Survey

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

# 64

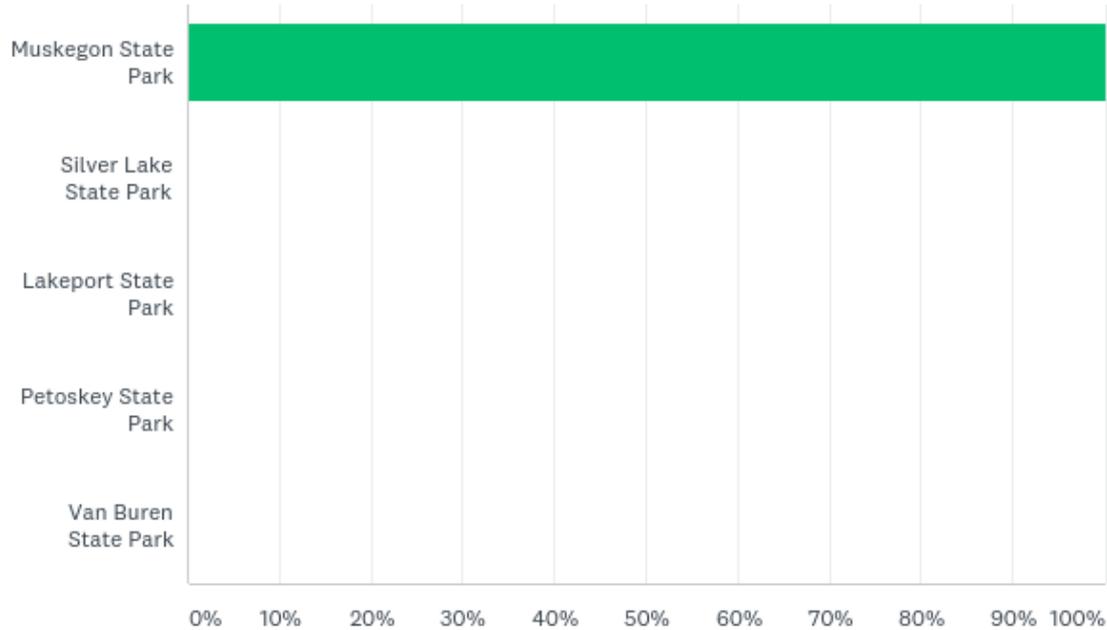
**Total Responses**

Date Created: Tuesday, October 09, 2018

Complete Responses: 64

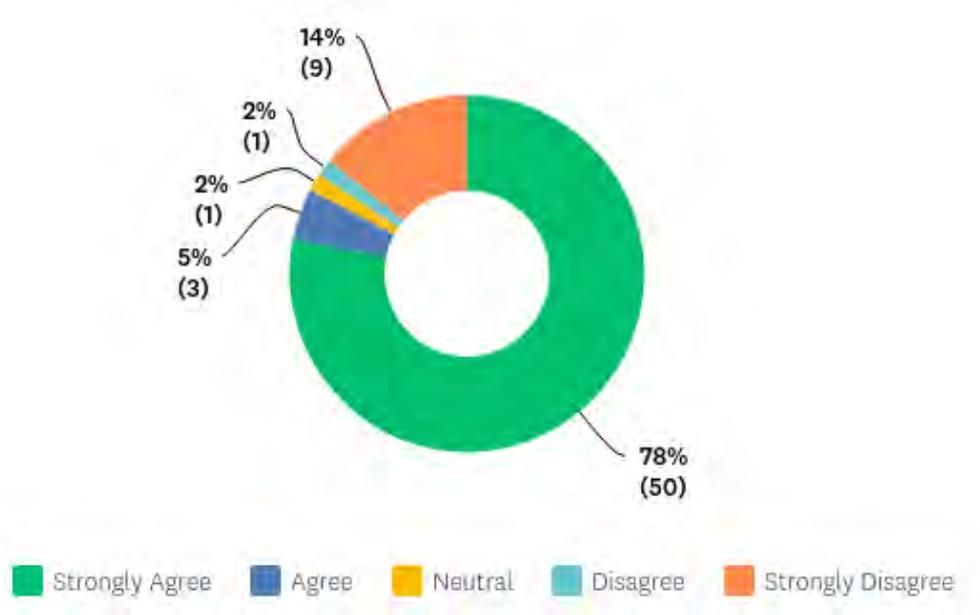
# Q1: Which facility did you participate in a shoreline ride?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



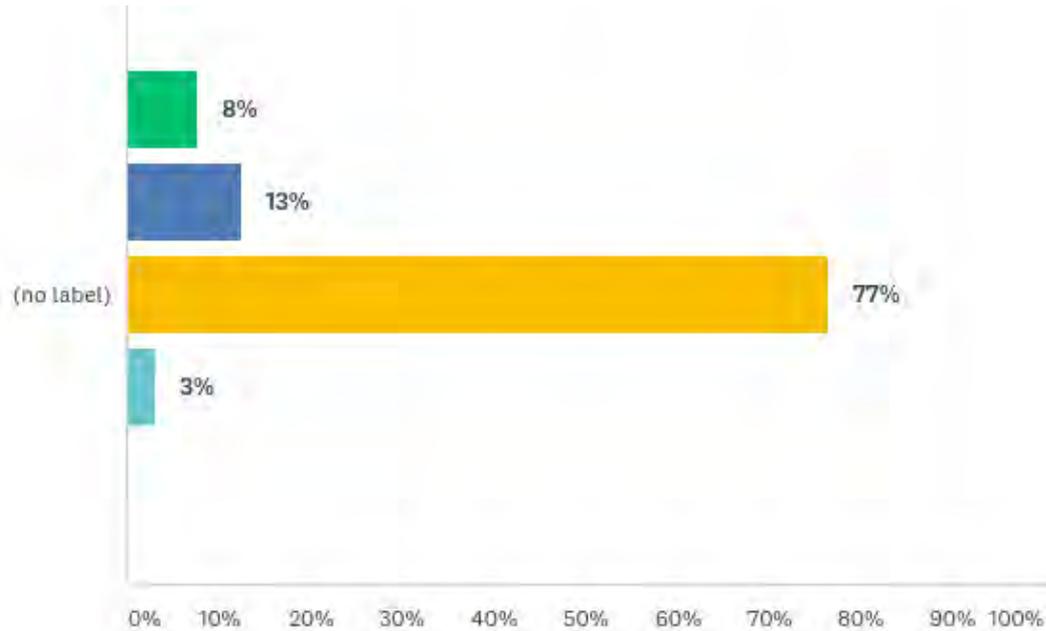
# Q2: The facilities parking lot provided enough space for all visitors.

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



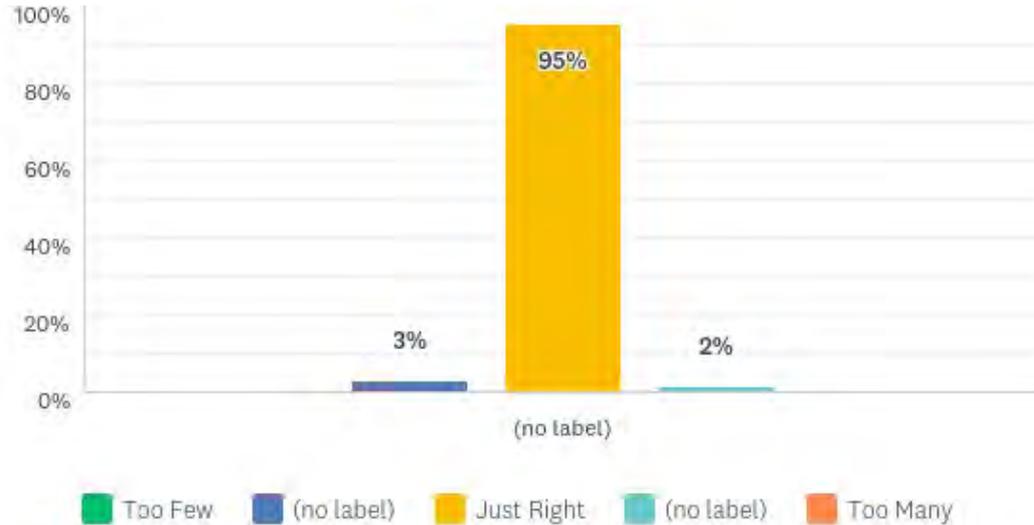
### Q3: The length of the ride was:

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



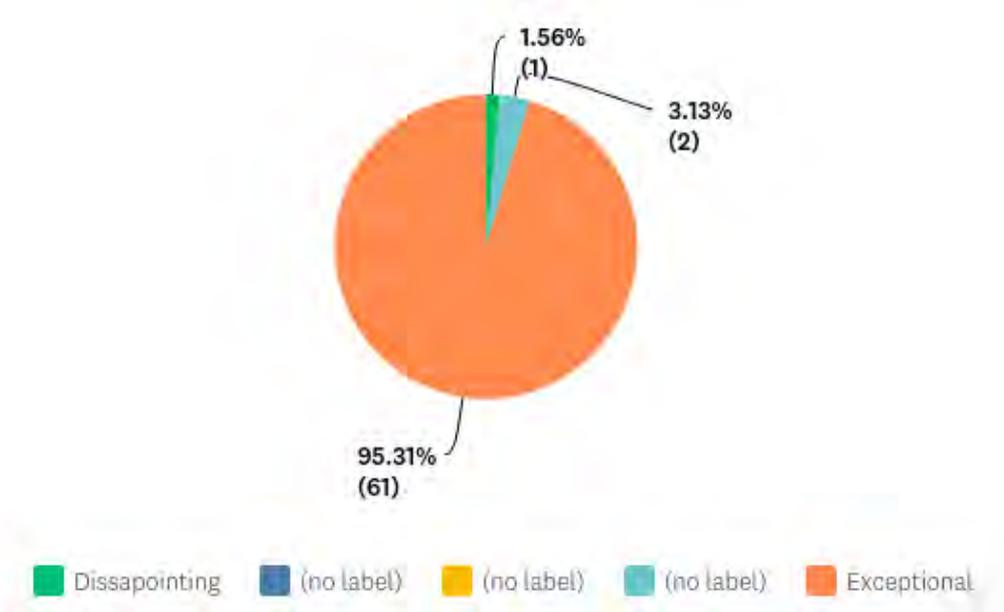
## Q4: The number of horses and riders at this location were:

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



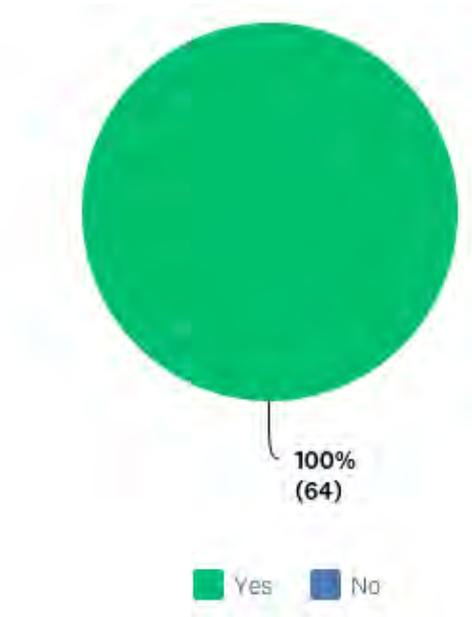
# Q5: Please rate the overall quality of your experience.

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



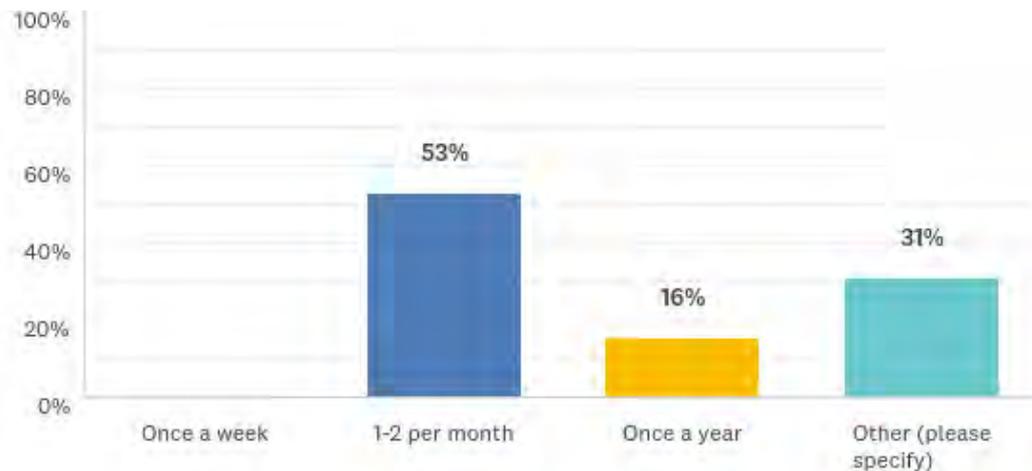
## Q6: The surface of the shoreline is suitable for equestrian use?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



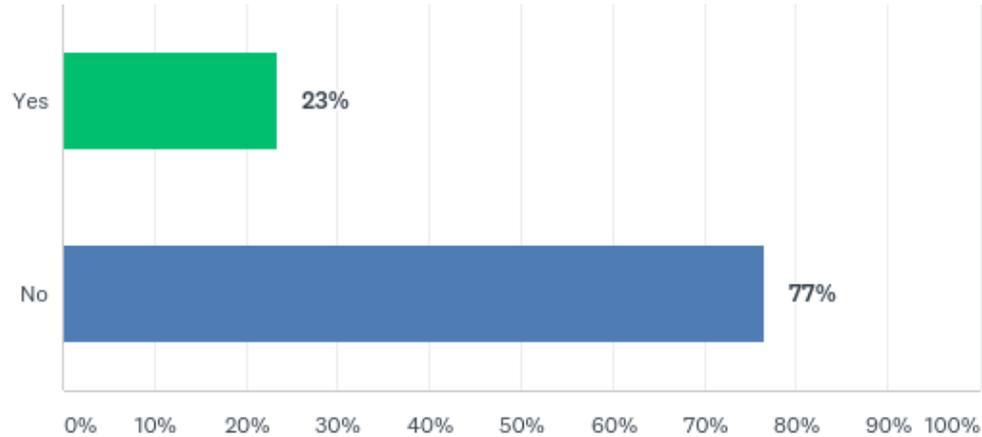
## Q7: How frequently would you visit this location if horseback riding were allowed?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



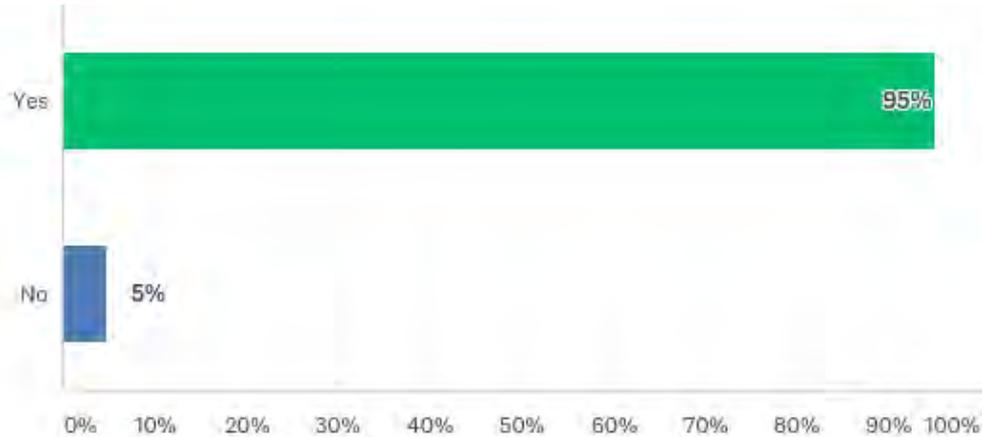
## Q8: Did your visit require you to stay over night?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0



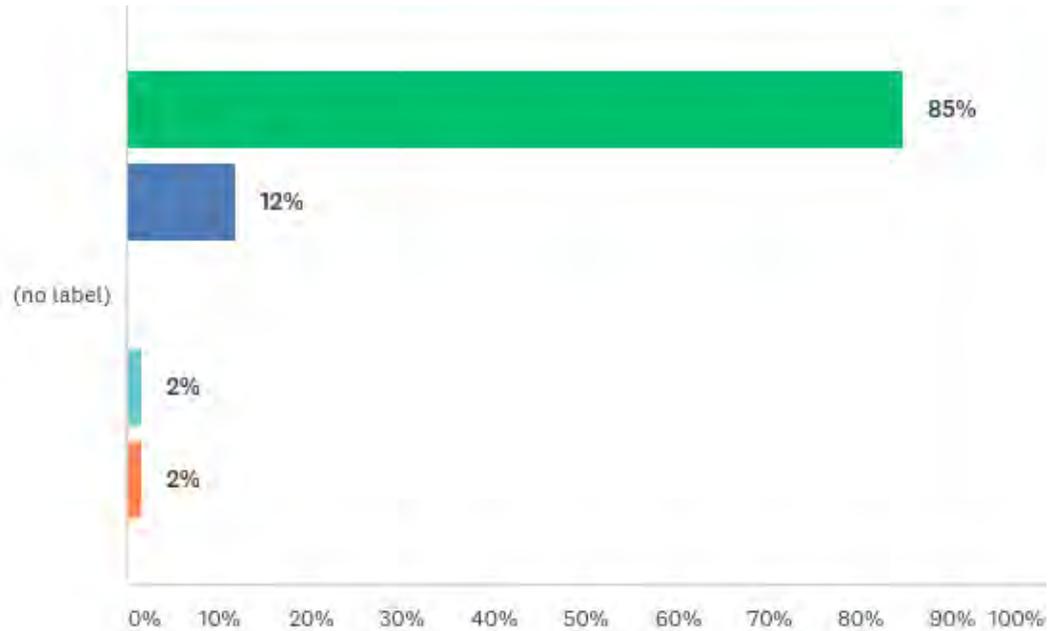
## Q10: Did you have interactions with non-equestrian visitors?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 2



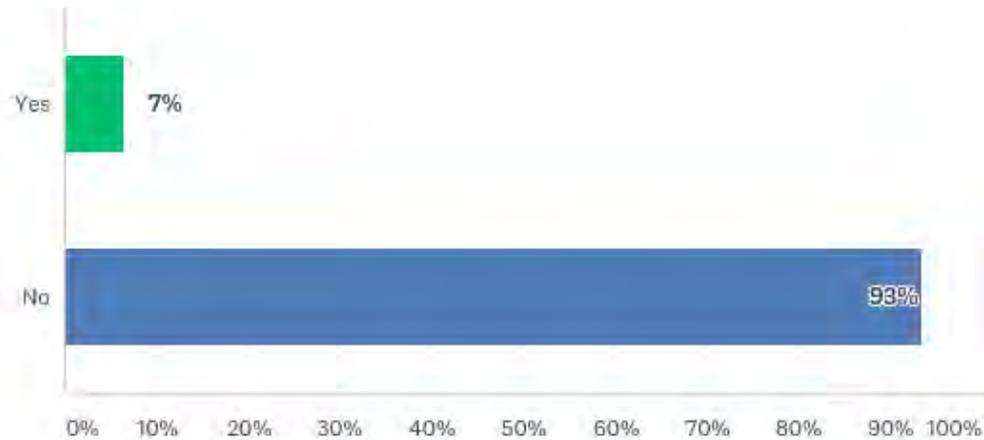
## Q11: Please rate the interaction

Answered: 59 Skipped: 5



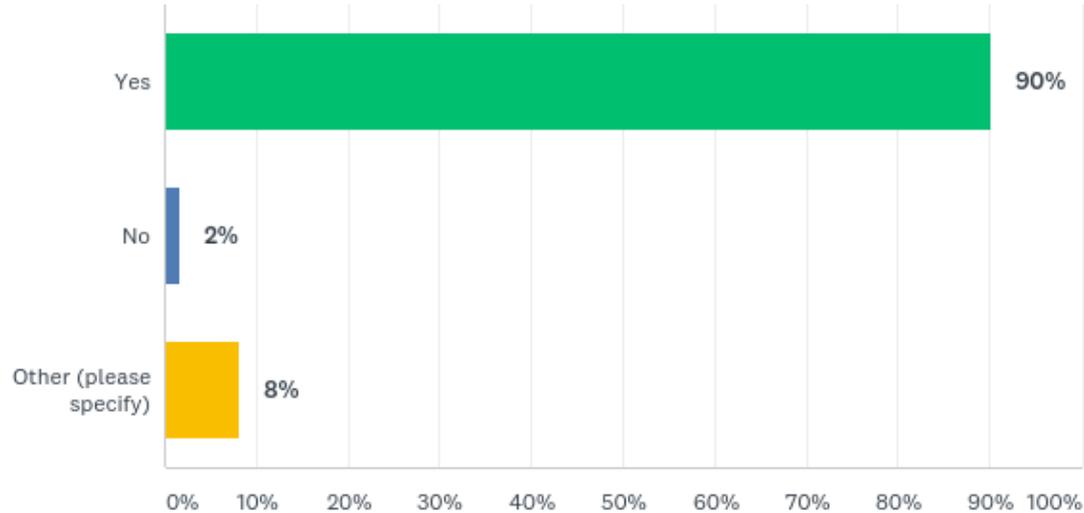
## Q12: Are you concerned about interactions with non-equestrian visitors at this location?

Answered: 61 Skipped: 3



# Q14: Would you be willing to pick up your manure in the park/shoreline and haul it away if this activity were to continue at this location?

Answered: 61 Skipped: 3



## Additional Comments

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- I LOVED it! This was on my bucket list and was perfect! Very well organized and gorgeous location! I'm Muskegon local and love new horse friendly local locations to ride :)
- Wonderful experience!
- Great compliments from riders & visitors. Kids loved petting the horses and visiting with the riders.
- Great experience. My horse was stressed. Not sure I would do it again. Parking and organization was excellent. Than you.
- Thank you so much for the chance to check off a bucket list wish!
- Thank you Best Day Ever!
- This was a wonderful experience! Thank you so much for making it possible. No concerns about other visitors - My horse is used to sharing trails with people hiking and riding bikes.
  
- All results are available to view <http://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-XLTQ83T/>

September 25, 2018

Report on our equestrian shoreline progress.

1. We're happy with the results of the Muskegon State Park shoreline ride on September 22. There were 69 riders of the 76 registered that attended the ride. Back Country Horsemen supplied liability insurance and organized the ride. See Riding Permit example. There were three (morning, afternoon and evening) sessions scheduled with 20-25 riders per session. We allowed one hour between each session for parking rotation. There were many positive comments from the participants and the general public alike. DNR Event Coordinator, Elissa Buck, collected surveys from the public, participants and DNR staff.



2. Local equestrians are planning a Rockport SP ride with the DNR on October 16, 2018.

3. Grace Adventures is planning a ride at Silver Lake SP on November 3rd. We're hoping DNR Barbara Graves and DNR Jacklin Blodgett will join us on this ride.



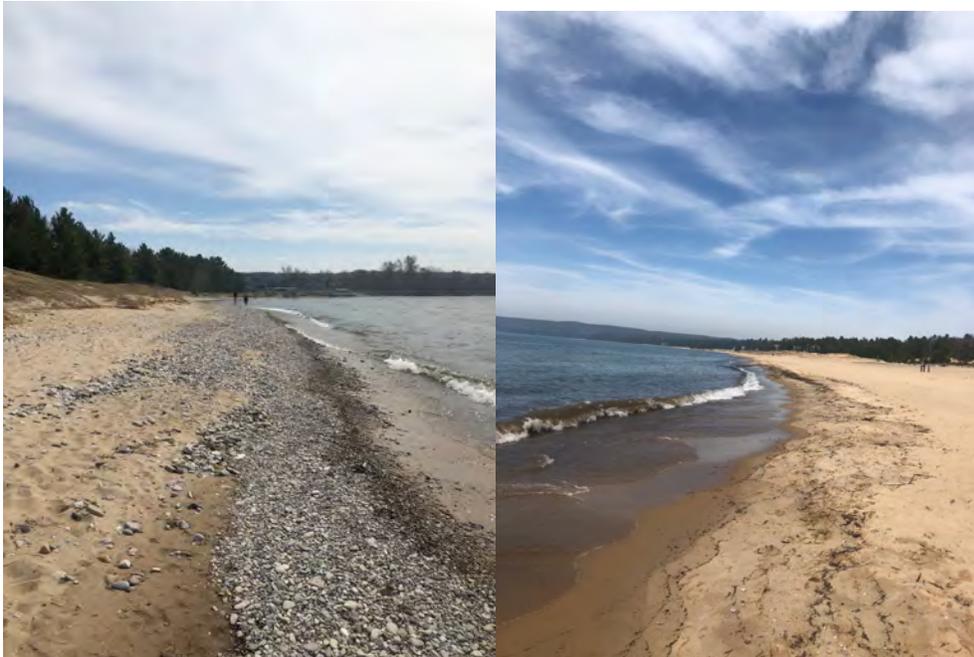
4. Lakeport SP has a small but worthy shoreline for equestrians. The entrance is sandy and gradual. The day use parking area is gated and fenced off from the road, so there will be limited shoreline foot traffic after Labor Day until Memorial Day. This is not a Piping Plover potential nesting area. Lakeport SP is an excellent equestrian shoreline location for Spring and Fall.



5. Van Buren SP has a small but worthy shoreline for equestrians. There are several miles of equestrian trails nearby. Manager, Kurt Maxwell has offered his staff to drive us in a 4 x 4 to pick up manure along the shoreline. There is a potential for loud sirens to go off at Palisades nuclear power plant at any time. Siren testings are on the first Tuesday of each month.



6. Petoskey State Park has a small but worthy shoreline for equestrians. The parking is paved but is adequate for several rigs right at the beach. Although the entrance is narrow with curves and could be a challenge for some larger rigs. The shoreline is very rocky in some areas. The campground closes on October 15. Due to the limited shoreline, equestrians should visit after that time.



I am happy to coordinate and attend any of the organized rides.

Best Regards,

Jenny Cook  
[cooknjenny@hotmail.com](mailto:cooknjenny@hotmail.com)  
(269)998-5916