

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)
MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 2020
Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM)

ATTENDEES

ETS

Amy Scharmen
Jenny Cook
Richard Kleinhardt
Karen Barnham
Kristie Walls

DNR

Ron Olson
Jackie Blodgett
Paul Yauk
Nikki Van Bloem
Annalisa Centofanti
Dakota Hewlett
Nicole Toman
PHONE:
Elissa Buck
Earl Flegler, Wildlife

Meeting called to order by Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS) Chair, Amy Scharmen, at 3:05pm

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Amy Scharmen provided an introduction and purpose for the EST workgroup.

Introduction:

The Equine Trails Subcommittee is an advisory group created as a subcommittee of the Michigan Trails Advisory Council which provides guidance and recommendations and works in cooperation with Michigan's DNR to help identify, develop, promote, connect, and maintain the statewide network of high-quality pack and saddle trails. The ETS representatives work as liaisons between the DNR and the equestrian friend's groups which have been created to help maintain and improve the equestrian trails, staging areas, and campgrounds throughout Michigan. These groups have conservatively contributed \$1.4 million in donations and volunteer hours in the last three years to the state-owned network of equestrian trails and camps.

ETS, since its creation in 2010, has helped to:

- Re-open closed trails at Elk Hill in Northern Michigan
- Re-open and re-use campgrounds at Big Oaks in Northern Michigan and Headquarters Lake in U.P.
- Improve equestrian campgrounds and staging areas, including corrals at campsites
- Bring horseback riding to the shores of Michigan's beaches (a highly desired tourism opportunity)
- Create new camps and designate new trails at Tin Cup Springs
- Support the DNR's statewide equestrian trail mapping
- Create an equestrian trail and camp inventory and a website/Facebook group to promote horseback riding in the state of Michigan

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- Update the equestrian trail and camp descriptions on the DNR website so users have easy access to all the necessary information to have a successful and enjoyable riding and camping experience

Anytime equine trail volunteers improve and maintain trails, we are impacting other user groups. At the very least hikers, but other users who regularly benefit from the efforts of volunteers who maintain and improve the equine trails can include cross country skiers, snowmobilers, hunters, runners, bird watchers, dog walkers and sledders. Another project we are working on at this time with the DNR is developing a non-motorized trail signage packet, a motorized packet has already been created. This will include suggestions for clear and consistent signage throughout the state which will indicate who can or cannot use the trails and how to safely share multi-use trails. Also included will be directional signage, so this will be consistent throughout the state, and leave no trace signage to help remind users to leave the trails as they found them or better and not use them as a dumping ground. We are identifying instructional signage, videos, and articles in cooperation with a mountain bike representative in order to determine their effectiveness from another trail user's viewpoint. This initiative also has brought awareness of the need to have a statewide DNR trail etiquette media campaign aimed at providing the education necessary for all multi-use trail users to enjoy our trails in a respectful and safe manner.

INTRODUCTIONS

Karen Barnham is an avid lifelong horse owner and endurance rider.

Jenny Cook, represents Southwest Michigan, enjoys state and national champion aggressive trail riding and is a leisure, outdoor enthusiast.

Amy Scharmen is part of the Board of Pinckney trail riders and Kensington trail riders.

Kristie Walls is on the board of Backcountry Horse and has owned horses for over 15 years. She is an all-around outdoor enthusiast.

Dick (Richard) Kleinhardt represents Northern Lower Michigan. He is President of Backcountry Horse. He shares a tribute to work with DNR in meaningful ways.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Amy Scharmen made a motion to approve the October 16, 2019 draft meeting minutes. Motion approved by committee.

The ETS committee proposed that the Chair has right to move agenda items out of order without the motion from all to approve. Committee members unanimously approved (without being noted on agenda).

No additional agenda items added to the February 21 draft. Motion approved to accept February 21, 2020 draft agenda as presented.

ACTION ITEMS

Signage Workgroup

DNR representative, Dakota Hewlett, is pushing for a campaign for trail etiquette working with Doug Donnelly (DNR) and Elissa Buck (DNR). Signage is in progress and preliminary proofs have been received.

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Anna Lee, DNR intern, will be assisting with the creation of a nonmotorized handbook.

Anna Lee stated the main purpose for the handbook is to provide a reference manual providing guidance and consistency moving forward. She will be researching what is used in other states and what is in our state now.

Kristie Walls polled the meeting audience to see if any have encountered horses on trails and how they interacted with this. There were several that responded. One man said he was not sure of the approach to take. Another woman said she kept a distance from the horses.

Dick Kleinhardt asked Dakota Hewlett for an update on funding sources for the signage. Nikki Van Bloem answered the question by saying the department is still waiting on costs to see what impact the project will be. Amy Scharmen said the next step will be to reach out to the EQ parks and campgrounds to see what will be needed. Every staging area should be consistent with signage.

Trails Directory

Amy Scharmen has created Michigan Horse Trails Directory on the internet. The site has gone live in January with a great response, along with a corresponding Facebook group. Additionally, this site is promoting trail groups to advertise their events in hopes of boosting attendance. (See Amy's report below)

Ortonville Trail Proposal

Only 8.5 miles of trails and the DNR would like at least 10 miles. There is a campground as well. Stewardship needs an archeology survey. (See Amy's report below)

Kristie Walls asked how does the DNR designate an historical site. Nicole Toman (DNR) replied the DNR becomes subject to those requirements that are identified by the state historical society. The DNR is required to comply with the additional protections. Nikki Van Bloem said the State is considering filling the current vacant archeology roles. Kristie Walls said it does not seem fair for a friends group to feel obligated to pay for a survey since DNR does not have an active person in that role. The DNR also is considering contracting a surveyor.

DNR Website Link – Trails & Campgrounds

Elissa Buck (DNR), is updating and completing a reference on descriptions of campgrounds and trails. Kimberly Kennedy (DNR) has been assisting, along with the friends and volunteer groups who help maintain the trails. Shore to Shore EQ trail camps will be included. Amy Scharmen can send pictures for the parks, Elissa Buck said that will be a summer project. However, please submit your photos to her in high resolution. Amy Scharmen said the mobile view of the website does not look the same as viewing on a PC. May have to clean up after records get updated. The coming up Horse EXPO in Lansing may be a good time to promote the website.

DNR Media

Amy Scharmen has concerns of trail events lacking coverages. Doug Donnelly and Elissa buck have been assigned to cover 2020 events. Amy Scharmen mentioned she has been sharing her information with Jon Pepin as well. Nikki Van Bloem said to circle around with Doug Donnelly to discuss upcoming events.

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February 21, 2020
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Chainsaw Recertification

Dick Kleinhardt announced there is a chainsaw recertification March 28, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. at Harrison Lumber in Harrison Michigan.

Amy Scharmen asked when Fort Custer's camping option will be added to the site for online reservation. Elissa Buck will check into this and get back with Amy Scharmen.

Ron Olson said because of high water tables there most likely will be no beach riding this summer. The shoreline has encountered thousands of dollars of damages already with more expected to come. Concerns are very high, last high water was in 1986. This will remain an issue for quite some time.

UPDATES

ETS Regional Updates

Karen Barnham

Upper Peninsula horse trails are limited and is disappointing. Although, in the Eastern UP a new trail has been opened, which brings the UP total of approximately 100 miles of horse trails compared to approximately 600 miles of bike trails.

Dick Kleinhardt

Dick Kleinhardt thanked Ron Olson for his support. Dick Kleinhardt mentioned the horse camping policy is ready and waiting for signature. He asked if there can be a check box on camp reservations indicating if you are camping with a horse?

Michigan legislative ride is not confirmed for May 26-29, 2020. More information to come.

Remaining ETS regional updates below.

DNR Staff Updates

Ron Olson pushed to have more enhancements made at the EQ campgrounds. He said the goal is to support horse users. Vacant campgrounds are not ideal for the park system support, as the parks are not funded by tax dollars, rather by parks fees. The DNR is looking to find a happy medium for all users, while being respectful to everyone. Kristie Walls responded by saying she understands the logic underlying the financial piece of this, however she is relaying the voice of her constituents surrounding campground concerns.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joan Duncan

Ms. Duncan represents the WUP Advisory Council Citizen. Ms. Duncan has requested the DNR convert Van Riper State Park to an EQ and ATV friendly park. Estimate to power eight sites is \$6800. The park accommodates seventy sites on south side of road and the north side has cabins and eight sites for horse trailers. EQ users are requesting power to these sites. The WUP Advisory Council is awaiting a response.

Meeting adjourned by ETS Chair, Amy Scharmen, at 5:03 p.m.

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)

MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2020

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ETS REGIONAL STAFF UPDATES

AMY SCHARMEN

ETS Report - SE – February 2020

Brighton Rec – Brighton Rec along with Pinckney Rec will be having a Spring Fling banquet with a silent auction fundraiser. High on their priority list for 2020 is to complete the Chambers Rd staging area which will allow direct access to the west side of the park trails which are less rocky and just as beautiful. It will be a wonderful addition to the horse trails.

Highland – Highland Rec's long-time park manager has retired, and they look forward to building a relationship with the new manager. They will be working to increase their membership, continue to fill the camp twice a year at their events and working towards the creation of a new staging area and campground in the old stables area.

Maybury Trail Riders – Maybury's focus for 2020 will be to continue work on the trails and trail markings

Ortonville – see III) c.

Pinckney – Pinckney Trail Riders will be working with our park manager to install new maps throughout the park and towards trail improvements in some muddy sections of the trail.

Pontiac Lake –

Proud Lake Trail Riders – Proud Lake Trail Riders held a banquet Feb 7th along with silent auction to get their season started. They have submitted to the park manager their idea of how to separate the bike and horse trails. The park is waiting for the mountain bike rep to do the same. They all met and walked a loop and talked about how to separate it and are going to continue to meet and walk loops to do the same. They seem to be in negotiation phase, but it's very positive that this huge safety concern is being addressed.

Trail Towns – No update

III) b. Michigan Horse Trails Directory – <http://michiganhorsetrails.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/michiganhorsetrailsdirectory/>

The directory has gone live and it only made sense to create a Facebook group to go along with it. I have been very pleased with the group, I received great info on a UP campground and the trails nearby within minutes of asking a question about it. In the group, I am also inviting trail groups to advertise their events and news, same as I have done for Southeast Michigan, but this will be for the whole state. There seems to be a lot of excitement over it which is great. I hope it boosts usage of our equestrian trails, camps, and promotes much support for our hard-working trail groups. The sister project of bringing the DNR website descriptions of trail and camps up to date is much requested as people have been checking out the links on the directory and finding information lacking and sometimes inaccurate. Thanks to Elissa

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for working on that. Giving people the information, they need to have a successful visit will greatly increase their confidence and lead to them hooking up the trailer to check out new areas. Michigan Horse Council has voted to sponsor the website financially for the 5 years I asked for. Maybe we can create a brochure in the future. I would like to thank the unnamed DNR employee who put together the 2012 spreadsheet I stumbled across online somehow, that was a big help!

III) c) Ortonville – Their WIP for extra trail mileage has been with Stewardship for more than a few months. At this time, Stewardship is saying they need an archeological survey and soil sample done because of concerns for historic sites in the area. There are two sections to their expanded trail mileage, one sight has documented historic sites, and another does not, but has been marked for survey as it has been deemed close enough to the other site to warrant it. There used to be state archeologists who would come to perform the surveys, but two have retired and are not going to be replaced and one is left who obviously has not enough time to get to all projects needed. Word is they are too busy for this survey. So, it has been suggested that the park manager or OREA will need to come up for the money for this. It seems that if the DNR is going to require this, they should have to fund it. There is no visible evidence of historic sites in these areas even though there is evidence of past farmsteads in other areas of the park. Needless to say, this is incredibly discouraging news. OREA has been working hard to fundraise towards trail creation but does not have enough to cover an archeological survey. Since the state ones are not available, could a walk with the district manager suffice or is there some other way to work through this and get onto the DNR's goal of having 10+ miles of trail at every riding area? Especially one with a campground.

III) d) DNR Website Trail and Camp Descriptions – Most of the descriptions have been submitted on the trail groups end. We are still working on Waterloo, Yankee Springs, Big Oaks, Elk Hill. The trail groups and trail users are thankful for this initiative and will be very happy to have detailed, accurate information, maps, GPS coordinates or address to staging area or campgrounds, and the links to the supportive trail groups displayed at a fingers click away. I did notice that the DNR website looks very different on a cell phone vs a computer, less information is available via phone. And I received a comment that it would be helpful to have a search function of trails in certain areas of the state, which is how the Michigan Horse Trails Directory is organized. I wanted it to be useful to local riders as well as visitors.

III) f) DNR media campaign – We had a phone conference with Doug Donnelly and Elissa Buck concerning the lack of equestrian representation in the DNR media. It was confirmed the photo library is lacking when it comes to horses and to remedy this, we will be scheduling a couple photo shoots at trail group events in 2020. I have sent Doug the event dates for Lower Michigan and MTRA's rides to see if any of those may work for the shoots, if there are other events the DNR should consider, please submit the dates to me. Doug also asked for information on trail etiquette for a DNR media campaign, I shared the two videos and two articles that we been discussing in the signage workgroup with Dakota and Trevor.

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RICHARD KLEINHARDT

**NORTHERN LOWER PENINSULA MICHIGAN EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT-
FEBRUARY 21, 2020**

Wintertime is a time for reflecting on this past year's accomplishments as well as the anticipation of planning for the many positive events for this spring, summer and fall riding season.

There is a lot happening in this region that will directly impact riding enthusiasts from across the State.

"Tin Cup Springs Horse Camp". We just officially came to an "official name" for Tin Cup Springs and we thought it was most desirable to call it a horse camp. Located by Luther and Chase, Michigan, northwest of Reed City. The campground has been approved with an \$85,000 budget, which will feature a generous portion of pull through sites, fire rings, picnic tables, well, hand pump, vault toilets and concrete manure bunkers. Preliminary clearing will begin this spring and summer with completion targeted for this fall.

"Elk Hill" will once again be ground zero for Back Country of Michigan's work bee being held May 13th-17th. Incorporated within this event will be our Pavilion Dedication which will be held on Friday, May 15th at high noon. We are currently working on our invitation list and look forward to the ribbon cutting ceremony! It's really quite a tribute to the equestrian community of Michigan working together to achieve this beautiful Pavilion. Equestrians collectively donated nearly \$30,000 towards this project. I'm sure that everyone will enjoy using this structure.

"Cheboygan Campground" has had \$15,000 approved from the State's budget for the project but right now seems to be encountering some hurdles regarding the approval process. We need to be pro-active to see this to completion.

Back Country of Michigan is once again proud to host a chain saw certification/recertification clinic on March 28th, in Harrison Michigan at Harrison Lumber Company. It will be held on Saturday from 10:00-1:00. RSVP required and open to all users. Stihl Corporation of Ohio does a great job at this event.

Volunteer Hours for Back Country, 2019 totaled \$137,099.65. Still awaiting other associations reporting.

MTRA will hold a Spring Work Bee at McKinley to clear the trail both ways on May 2nd.

I was extremely proud to present Anna Sylvester the first ever Back Country of Michigan "Friend of Michigan Equestrian Award" at our annual February meeting. She has done much to advance the plight of our quest for "fairness and justice".

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Kleinhardt

Northern Lower Peninsula Representative ETS

Pres. BCHMI-PR&B

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)
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Kristie Walls

Central Region Report February 21, 2020

A couple of things I would like to commend this group for having accomplished in the last few years:
1 ~ We were able to work with our DNR partners and re-evaluate state laws about fencing on public lands. Corrals or stalls as temporary housing for our horses do not violate state laws any more than camping on state lands. This has provided a needed option for horse campers. Ionia has 9, soon to be 11, of 46 equine campsites with corrals. Yankee Springs has 12 of 25 sites with corrals.

2 ~ The DNR has completed the mapping of horse trails on state lands and is making progress in getting all those maps available on DNR Horse Trail web pages.

The subject is not on our agenda, but I feel compelled to bring up the Equine Camping Policy once again. The topic was raised to bring about consistency in between all horse camps on state property. I'm sure all of us on this committee would like to see the written document that will be the policy going forward. When will it be available to us?

On the conference call of January 31, there were some truly valuable capital outlays announced; valuable, that is, as long as the MIDNR continues to manage the equine campgrounds as equine campgrounds.

The investments in Waterloo (35k), Ionia (95k) Tin Cup Springs (85k) and the MTRA camp Old Mackinac (15k) are only valuable to horsemen if these camps continue in their purpose of serving horsemen. In a nutshell, the DNR has long standing established rules that EXCLUDE campers with horses from every non-horse campground and declares this action is not discriminatory; however, it is stated that excluding ANYONE from a camp designed specifically for horse camping and upgraded and co-maintained by equestrians cannot happen because it would be discrimination. I just can't follow the two sidedness of this statement.

Do not misunderstand. Equestrians do not wish to camp in the modern camps with non-horse people. The point is what is good safety practice in one campground is also good safety practice in the other. The slow approach to adding non-horse camps in the Pigeon to the reservation system was explained as a short staffing issue in the Pigeon. It's frustrating to me that this didn't happen last year when River Camp was added, or at least now, while Camis is being upgraded / modified (meaning the request could have been made last July/August). The lack of forethought last year in adding only the River Camp (the only horse camp), of all the camps in the Pigeon River area, to the reservation system baffles me. How could those in a decision making position not realize the situations this would create?

As proof of the contribution horse people continue to invest in State of Michigan trails and camps, please be reminded of the recorded values (noting it is very difficult to capture all actual volunteer efforts) contributed the last few years.

- 2017 \$447,730.91
- 2018 \$300,247.50
- 2019 \$640,406.20

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)

MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2020

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This combines for a three-year total documented investment in Michigan horse camps and trails of \$1,388,384.01. This – knowing there were substantial contributions that were not recorded. Truthfully, we are probably on the high side of \$1.5 million over three years.

Most equestrians are thrilled with the capital investments being made in the four parks named earlier; however, with those investments come questions, some of which I have raised in the past year. Is the MDNR willing to support and sustain those investments, with additions to the budgets of the named parks, to manage and maintain new assets, or are past patterns going to continue and the parks be forced to maintain the new assets out of already strapped budgets? Additionally, there is still the looming question, being asked by a very concerned contingent, “Are these locations actually being groomed to become non-horse camps?” I sure hope not.

Jenny Cook

Southwest Michigan Equine Trails February 2020 Report

Allegan State Game Area - F.A.C. E. T. S. (Friends of Allegan County Equestrian Trails Systems) continue to maintain trails. Allegan County Pleasure Riders are organizing the 46th Annual Benefit Ride for Wings of Hope Hospice of Allegan County, Wings Home and Renew Therapeutic Riding Center on Saturday, April 18, 2020. Last year, \$13,558.00 was raised from over 69 donated appreciation prizes, volunteers and participants at this event. Over \$275,000 has been raised for the community in the past 45 years. The Oak Leaf Run Endurance Ride will be October 10th and 11th. This is a sanctioned American Endurance Ride Conference (AERC), the national governing body for endurance riding. Riders choose distances of 25, 30, 50 or 75 miles. Horses have veterinary checks before, during and after the rides.

Riders from across the nation and Michigan will be competing.

Bass River Recreational Area - Equestrians from the area and myself met with DNR Manager Pat Whalen on 12-10-19. All persons who maintain Bass River trails must fill out the Use Permit each calendar year and email to Pat Whalen. Equestrians, DNR Pat Whalen and DNR Sean Simonson will work together marking and clearing trails this Spring.

** Please consider posting “Please report any poaching, vandalism or illegal activity to 1-800-292-7800.” at all trailhead kiosks.**

Ft Custer Recreational Area - Ft Custer Horse Friends Association has a new website:

<https://www.fchfa.org/> We are thankful for the cooperation of DNR staff and FCHFA, where the seven, newly approved, permanent, rustic, overnight campsites have been completed at the equestrian trailhead. There are many meetings, potlucks, rides and workdays planned throughout the year listed on the website. There will be a Spring Fundraising Campout at Whitford Lake May 14-17 and a Fall Fundraising Campout at Whitford Lake September 17-20. Ft Custer Harvest Fest will be October 9-11.

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MEETING MINUTES
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Great Lakes Shoreline Horseback Riding 2020 Opportunities:

Indiana Dunes National Park -

May 9, 2020 11:00-1:00 Central Time

October 3, 2020 during the Outdoor Adventure Festival <https://www.dunesoutdoorfestival.com/>

Michigan Competitive Mounted Orienteering 2020 Schedule:

March 7 & 8 Windy Ridge Horse Farm in Holly, MI

March 21st and 22nd at Camp Eberhart

April 3rd, 4th and 5th at Yankee Springs, Middleville, MI

May 16th and 17th Hadley Hills

May 30th and 31st Silver Creek,

July? E.B. Cummings Center

Fall C? Camp Eberhart, Three Rivers, MI

October 16th, 17th and 18th Kensington Metro Park, Milford, MI

DNR REGIONAL STAFF UPDATES

North Central LP (Paige Perry, DNR)

MULTI-PROGRAM PROJECTS

- Alpena to Hillman Phase 1 to Herron with 2 bridges- newest update involves a new rule for wetlands mitigation. Currently working with EGLE and MDOT to determine status.
- Little Black River Bridge on the NCST temporary 8' wide bridge in place to avoid winter reroute onto ~2 miles of city streets. Design is engineered and bids came in significantly over cost estimates. Still seeking funding to construct new.
- Gaylord South Trail outcry over the control structures installed to separate trail from RR seems to have subdued. Gaylord Area Snowmobile Club, Otsego County, City of Gaylord Chamber, Lake State Railway and DNR (specifically club contact Scott Thompson) have done a great job coordinating a consistent message to the public in terms of transparent information on the resurfacing project and the snowmobile public.
- Rogers City Spur Proposal
 - 'Bypass' Trail proposal was approved contingent on MDOT and PIRC permissions. MDOT permissions received. PIRC denied. Many thanks to Dave Campo of PIST and Matt Treinen DNR Contact! There is good momentum now to continue to pursue a hybrid

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multi-use proposal using some Carmeuse (that would trade for DNR owned corridor) and some MDOT.

- Swan River Bridge on Rogers City Spur is slated for engineering in 20. Construct in 21-22.
- MDOT initiated meeting to discuss realignment of NWST along US 31 due to upcoming road project

NAW

- Event Permits: Great Lks Relay, Fundraiser in the Jordan Valley
- Trail Proposals: 3 for NCT keep stalling... Still trying to keep moving (will get finalized before spring!)
- Pathway 'you-are-here' maps: Working to finalize new template for next batch of pathway signs
- Norway Ridge EGLE Permit for multi-site maintenance is nearing final approval (many thanks to Local DNR Contact Blake Gingrich at PH Hoeft SP)
- Project Bridges on
 - NCT/IBT- Carp River Bridge - engineering cost estimates and structural options are being reviewed currently with NCTA, consultant
 - HCP - Black River Bridge - Engineering services are requested (1:3) for brand new build (this bridge was removed 3 years ago due to structural instability)
 - HCP - Pigeon River Bridge - Engineering services are requested (2:3) for evaluation, likely removal of existing and rebuild (this bridge was repaired 7 years ago and is twisting again due to poor design)
 - Pickerel Lake Pathway - Pickerel River Bridge - Engineering services are requested (3:3) for design only (hoping that staff and volunteers can remove current footbridge and replace in kind)

ETS

- Trail Proposals: Inspiration Point EQ Pathway and Horse Camp proposal near Cheboygan pending

SAW

- JVTC Pinney Bridge Rd: Letter sent to JKVTC to explain Right of Way questions brought up at last SAW meeting
- Event Permits: Vintage Snowmobile out of Indian River FOE and Petoskey Snowmobile Club

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- Incident Reports: Derailment of train in Otsego Co, Single snowmobile impact to posts, Snowmobile stuck in RR Switch

ORVAW

- Event Permits: Six Days of Michigan, Rites Of Spring, working with Elissa Buck to establish ROS into a multi-year event permitting pilot
- Grading Contracts for next summer – working to secure agreements/ contracts to work in 2 additional maintenance grades on dual use Routes that have been historically graded only once in late fall

Northeastern LP (Amy Swainston, DNR)

NAW

- Greg Kinser attended last Grayling Trail Committee Group (interest in Pure Mi Trail designation for water trail, crack repair of existing non-motorized trail); as well as meeting with Road Commission and Township supervisors for local community fundraising for Iron Belle trail progress within the County
- Assisted City of Clare by providing a letter of commitment from RTP funds for the MDNR match of \$300,000 to complete a 2.5-mile gap in the Pere Marquette trail which is a match to a TAP grant
- NEMCOG – Sunrise Committee is wrapping up preliminary plans for extending a bicycle / pedestrian path from Alpena to Oscoda.
- Continuous work by NEMCOG in wrapping up preliminary plans for Roscommon, Ogemaw. Continued detailed preliminary plans and designs for Iosco, Crawford.
- Recently Trails have been getting some snow resulting in improved groomed ski trails and reducing the hard packed – icy conditions. (Ogemaw, Tisdale, Mason Tract)

SAW

- Trail inspection of the Thumb area trails was done in early Feb. and substantial signage was done to all the trails to be open for the February snow systems. Efforts are continuing to update the maps to align with current land rights and Trail proposal information.
- Kalkaska county snowmobile – groomer incident/accident; speed was noted as the contributing factor in the initial report.
- (Continue to have numerous inquiries at Customer Service Center / Law Enforcement contacts related to wheeled vehicle use on groomed snowmobile trails. Many of which were inventoried as forest road, county seasonal road or are part of the designated ORV route system)

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)
MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 2020
Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM)

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ETS:

- Proposed EMR CCAA adjustments to FRD for areas where Shore to Shore trail encroached into the protection habitat to lessen the reporting / impacts the threatened species near Grayling.

ORV:

- A wheeled motorized activity form (PR0358) was created to facilitate notification of the activity by the organizer to the Department and to allow for staff review of the activity to determine whether the event permit criteria has been met. This form establishes a consistent mechanism for organizers to provide basic activity information for evaluation. Staff were provided the form in Feb. and will be posted on the DNR Website soon.
- Concern expressed by clubs seeking request for reimbursements (RFR) to reduce backlog of requests and follow thru with reimbursement requests. This may be resolved with MAGG but there is a need to define and standardize ways to keep sponsors in the loop of who's has / has not approved the RFR. I.E.:If it has been received by Trail Specialist; if it has been checked; approved for payment to Lansing. Locally I have responded to RFR confirming receipt and included the club when approved – processed on to Lansing.
- (Continue to have numerous inquiries at Customer Service Center / Law Enforcement contacts related to wheeled vehicle use on groomed snowmobile trails. Many of which were inventoried as forest road, county seasonal road or are part of the designated ORV route system)
- Proposed EMR CCAA adjustments to FRD for areas where ORV trails encroached into the protection habitat to lessen the reporting / impacts the threatened species. (Leota, Old State House)
- ORV Jonesville Bride – have consultant hired to look at bridge and evaluate current condition and improvements for connectivity.

MTAC:

Continue to have numerous inquiries at Customer Service Center / Law Enforcement contacts related to wheeled vehicle use on groomed snowmobile trails that are dual designated.

Northwestern LP (Scott Slavin, DNR)

Current priority project list funded or partially funded for 2020

Non-Motorized Projects:

1. East Branch of the Hersey River culvert replacement
 - a. Location: White Pine Trail, Ashton MI East Branch Hersey River
 - b. Status: Engineering and design complete, project is bid out.
 - c. Cost: 1.1 million

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)

MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2020

Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM)

- d. Funding: "funded" Project was part of the 11-mile paving project from Reed City to Leroy. The remaining funding for the paving project will be used for culvert replacement.
2. Rogers Farm Pond culvert replacement
 - a. Location: White Pine Trail, Stanwood
 - b. Status: Engineering and design complete, project is bid out
 - c. Cost: \$382000
 - d. Funding: "funded" using a trust fund grant and part of a 3 million MEDC grant.
3. Cold Creek culvert replacement
 - a. Location: White Pine Trail, South of Big Rapids
 - b. Status: Engineering and design is underway
 - c. Cost: Unknown
 - d. Funding: "funded" using MEDC grant for 3 million.
4. Byers Creek culvert replacement
 - a. Location White Pine Trail, south of Big Rapids
 - b. Status: Engineering and design is underway
 - c. Cost: Unknown
 - d. Funding: "funded" using MEDC grant for 3 million.
5. Tustin culvert replacement
 - a. Location: White Pine Trail, Tustin
 - b. Status: Engineering and design underway
 - c. Cost: \$ 500,000
 - d. Funding: "funded" funding has been provided form the snowmobile supplemental fund.
6. Reed City Covered Bridge replacement
 - a. Location: White Pine Trail, Reed City
 - b. Status: Bridge inspection report and conceptual design is complete.

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)

MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2020

Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM)

- c. Cost: 1.2 million
 - d. Funding: “not funded” Bridge inspection/conceptual design was funded. Additional funding for replacement has been pursued with TAP grant and NRTF grant, both unsuccessful.
7. 29-mile paving project Big Rapids to Sand Lake
- a. Location: White Pine Trail, Big Rapids to Sand Lake
 - b. Status: Culvert replacement is underway, RFP’s need to be submitted for engineering and design.
 - c. Cost: Estimated cost 8-9 million
 - d. Funding: “not fully funded” 3 million has been acquired by a MEDC grant and is being utilized to repair several culverts that need to be repaired prior to paving. The remaining balance of MEDC grant will be used for engineering and design.
8. Lewis Bridge Abutment project
- a. Location: Betsie Valley Trail, Elberta
 - b. Status: Engineering and design is complete, Natural Rivers Permit is out for review
 - c. Cost: \$79,000
 - d. Funding: “funded” RTP funding and friends group matching grant has been utilized to fund the project.
9. Re-Surfacing project Crystal Lake Segment
- a. Location: Betsie Valley Trail, Beulah
 - b. Status: Engineering and design is complete
 - c. Cost: \$300,000
 - d. Funding: “partially funded” Friends group received a NRTF grant for \$150k, RTP grant for \$150,000 has been submitted.
10. Betsie Valley Trail Master Planning design
- a. Location: Betsie Valley Trail, Frankfort to Copemish
 - b. Status: Conceptual design being completed by Johnson and Hill
 - c. Cost: \$40,000

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)
MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 2020
Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM)

- d. Funding: “funded” Friends of the BVT funded this project.

11. Sign Project Pere Marquette Trail

- a. Location: Baldwin to Clare
- b. Status: A project request needs to be submitted
- c. Cost: \$100,000
- d. Funding: “funded” RTP funding has been allocated to this project.

12. Cadillac Pathway single track development

- a. Location: Cadillac Pathway, Cadillac
- b. Status: Mapping underway for 12 miles of new single track
- c. Cost: Unknown
- d. Funding: NMMBA and DNR seeking grants

Snowmobile Program

13. Bear Creek Swamp re-route

- a. Location: Free Soil, Lake and Mason Counties
- b. Status: EPA permit for construction is out for review
- c. Cost: \$130,000
- d. Funding: “funded” Funding was provided from the snowmobile program.

14. Fife Lake re-route/Easement acquisition

- a. Location: Fife Lake, Trail 5
- b. Status: Re-route construction is completed; easement acquisition has been requested.
- c. Cost: Unknown
- d. Funding: “unfunded” Request for use of snowmobile easement fund has been requested.

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)

MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2020

Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM)

15. Manistee River Bridge decking project

- a. Location: Betsie Valley Trail, Mesick
- b. Status: Inspection and scoping report has been completed, decking project is on hold
- c. Cost: 1 million
- d. Funding: "unfunded" Inspection and scoping report was funded with RTP dollars. Engineering/design need to be funded along with construction this is estimated to be 1 million.

16. Kaleva to Chief snowmobile easement purchase

- a. Location: Chief
- b. Status: Property acquisition is underway and scheduled for presentation to the NRC for approval.
- c. Cost: \$80,000 for property and \$100,000 for land clearing and capping of the surface.
- d. Funding: "funded" Snowmobile acquisition fund has been utilized to fund this project.

Off Road Vehicle Program

17. Missaukee Junction ORV trail reroutes

- a. Location: Cadillac
- b. Status: Project was complete in 2019 but a portion of trail was obliterated by a timber harvest
- c. Cost: Unknown
- d. Funding: FRD will utilize timber sale management fund to complete the reroute on the obliterated trail.

18. Missaukee County 2 unnamed creek bridge replacements

- a. Location: Missaukee County, Miss-kal trail
- b. Status: Engineering and designing is underway
- c. Cost: \$500,000
- d. Funding: "funded" funded with 2019 supplemental.

EQUINE TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)
MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 2020
Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM)

19. Sharman RD Trail Head construction

- a. Location: Grand Traverse County, Grand Traverse Motorcycle Trail
- b. Status: Trail proposal is still under review
- c. Cost: \$20,000
- d. Funding: “funded pending proposal” The site is a natural gas pumping station that has been de-commissioned. The gas company will be helping to grade, gravel and improve the access road.

**PAUL GABERDIEL, DNR
FEBRUARY 2020**

Workgroup updates,

MTAC- Haywire Grade has been awarded the 2020 Pure Michigan Trail award. The Haywire is also celebrating its 50th anniversary as a rail trail this year. Events celebrating its 50th anniversary will be snowmobile, Equestrian, Bicycling and ORV. We have had 3 major storms in the East UP. Because of the heavy damage seen on the snowmobile trails, trail maintainers my want to plan for additional trail maintenance work this spring.

ETS- Haywire Grade 50th anniversary event will on June 6, 2020.

NAW- Haywire 50th anniversary biking event will be on August 22, 2020. We have had 3 major storms in the East UP. Because of the heavy damage seen on the snowmobile trails, trail maintainers my want to plan for additional trail maintenance work this spring.

ORVAW- Haywire 50th anniversary ORV event will be on October 3, 2020.

Haywire Grade has been named as a Pure Michigan Trail. We have had 3 major storms in the East UP. Because of the heavy damage seen on the snowmobile trails, trail maintainers my want to plan for additional trail maintenance work this spring.

SAW- Haywire 50th anniversary Snowmobile event will be February 29, 2020.

Haywire Grade has been named as a Pure Michigan Trail.

Ride Right campaign placemats have been distributed to 7 food locations for last weekend, working on distribution to 4 more for this weekend.

Haywire 50th anniversary events participation registration can be done online at www.visitmanistique.com