

Equine Trailways Subcommittee: EQ NewsNote #1
March 5, 2013

This email is the first EQ NewsNote from the Equine Trailways Subcommittee (the ETS), sent courtesy of the Michigan DNR. This EQ NewsNote is being sent to contact persons of each trail riding association across the state. The NewsNotes will be periodically sent to you updating your association on equine issues, announcements, meetings, trails and facilities.

We ask you to send this and subsequent EQ NewsNotes on to your association or club members. If you have received this NewsNote by email and need to update your email address, simply click on “manage subscriptions” at the bottom of the email. To add members to this ETS email contact list, please notify DNR-Bulletins@michigan.gov.

What is the ETS?

On April 1, 2010, the Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS) and the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Committee (MSTAC) were created by Public Acts 45 and 46 (aka the Right to Ride) legislation. These acts defined equine use on state lands and charged the ETS, MSTAC, and the DNR with the responsibility of developing recommendations for a trail network system for the state. The ETS also advises the DNR on equine trails, facilities, and issues.

Who is on the ETS?

Current members of the ETS are Sandra Batie (chair), Jan Herrick (Vice-chair) Mike Foote, Joni Gleason, Dick Kleinhardt, and Sarah Nicholls.

What are some of the activities of the ETS?

Since September 2010, the ETS has been working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and others to maintain and improve equine trail riding in the state. As required by statute, in June 2011, the ETS produced a 2011 Recommendations Report, and this report was accepted by MSTAC.

The MSTAC, as required by statute, has developed a draft comprehensive statewide railway network plan for all types of trails—motorized and nonmotorized. Drawing on the 2011 Recommendations Report, the ETS provided comprehensive information for this MSTAC plan with respect to horse trails and facilities as well as recommendations. The unabbreviated equestrian chapter is found as appendix 6 in the draft MSTAC plan. It is well worth reading since it includes information on current riding trails and facilities, rules and regulations as well as a vision for the future of trail riding.

As part of the preparation for that MSTAC report, the ETS and the DNR conducted 5 focus groups around the state collecting opinions of equine trail riders. In addition, there have been over 500 surveys returned from riders as to their trail riding recommendations.

The 2011 ETS recommendations report, the equestrian chapter of the MSTAC Comprehensive Trail Plan draft, and the results of the surveys and focus groups can be found on the ETS page on the Michigan DNR website at:

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-39002_56382_56889---,00.html

The ETS also continues to actively address equine trail riding concerns, gaps, and opportunities. As part of the MSTAC planning process, ETS (in partnership with the DNR) is also developing an inventory of existing trails and facilities—with trail maps. More on these accomplishments in forthcoming EQ NewsNotes!

This is an exciting time for equine trail recreation. There is considerable interest around the state about improved use of our trails and state lands—current and new-- to promote recreation, tourism, businesses, healthy exercise, and enhanced sense of place. Governor Rick Snyder strongly supports Michigan becoming the #1 trail state. The ETS and many other user groups—coordinated through MSTAC--will be working to move these trail opportunities into realities. Stay tuned.