



P.O. Box 57 Durham, CT 06422-0057

Meeting Minutes for December 13, 2011

Attending:

Leslie Lewis, Jan Collins, Meg Sautter, Ruth Beardsley, Laurie Giannotti, and Diane Ciano

Call To Order:

The meeting was held at the Northeast Utilities Building in Berlin, CT. Meeting called to order at 6:15PM.

Review Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes of September 13, were reviewed, edited and accepted. Motion by Leslie, 2nd Jan. Motion carried.

Web Page for EAC Update:

Laurie updated Judy and Ruth's appointment information as well as a group photo.

STATE PARK & FOREST Updates:

Lost Silvermine Horse Camp Update:

Yellow Diamond markers for 5 and 10 mile loop have been placed by Jean Morrison. She will be adding additional "confidence markers" to them. CHC will work with the Friends of Goodwin to mark the 15 mile loop to Goodwin SF & back to the Natchaug SF Horse Camp.

Diane noted that the orange markers used to temporarily mark trees that were on a "Wish List" to be taken down by DEEP as they impede truck and trailer access into the campsites were removed. Diane will contact Scott regarding this as she had not heard from him as to whether or not the markers were removed by DEEP. She will also contact him regarding the installation of the bathrooms at the campsite.

Diane will send in receipts and volunteer hours for reimbursement for work done at camp for the RTA Grant.

SHENIPSIT SF. Update:

Jan reported Soapstone Mtn Loop A has been marked so far but with the aftermath of the Oct storm it and all the other trails will require extensive clean up. Leslie asked if CHC would like any holders at a kiosk that they are building at Soapstone. All agreed this would be a great idea and that Share the Trail and CHC brochures would be good informational tools for the kiosk and CHC would like to have two holders for the kiosk.

Leslie mentioned if CHC would help to pay for a sign along the trail where multi-use departs from the hiking trail. She will get back to Diane on the cost and it will be brought up at the next CHC meeting.

STATE PARK & FOREST Updates: (continued)

GOODWIN SF. Update:

Jan will meet with local equestrians to review the 15 mile loop from Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp to be marked and find any other possible alternate trails to keep off the private lands and the very rocky trail that is on the state land.

Jan will confirm if a hitching post at the parking area is still in the plans.

NIPMUCK SF Update:

There was no further discussion on the progress of having a parking lot for access into the forest at this meeting.

SCANTIC RIVER LINEAR SP Update:

Jan reported that DEEP has placed the signage depicting – EAST and WEST parking lots along Rte 190 in Enfield.

LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION:

There was nothing new to report

OLD BUSINESS:

TRAIL SURFACE STUDY:

Ruth has interviewed multiple town representatives (Park & Rec, Zoning, Conservation Commission, land trusts, etc.) from Cheshire, Shelton, Bethany and North Haven regarding the four questions at issue: (1) cost and generally what is involved to install a trail, (2) cost and generally what is involved to maintain a trail, (3) environmental impact, and (4) suitability for use by various user groups. Additional interviews are planned for North Haven. Three other towns have been nonresponsive. Ruth will contact other towns. Leslie will contact East Hampton representatives about the Air Line Greenway regarding the four issues.

So far the information is that it costs about a million dollars per mile to pave a trail, including studies, designs, excavation, material, labor, etc. Best info re: unpaved improved trails was from Shelton but need more towns for consensus. Unpaved trails for the towns interviewed were installed by volunteers. Paved and unpaved trails require little maintenance once installed, other than keeping them clear of fallen trees, debris and weeds (for some unpaved trails). The towns with paved trails got funding from the state and/or federal governments for installation. All of the towns rely heavily on volunteer labor to install and maintain trails. None of the towns have separate budgets for trail maintenance labor or material; these items, to the extent paid by the towns, are part of the Park & Rec or Public Works budgets.

Ruth lined up another college student to do the computer research but the student cancelled.

SCORP:

Diane reports that there has been much discussion regarding the SCORP funding and how the monies are determined to be allocated for spending. Diane noted that since most of the response from the SCORP survey indicated people wanted access and improved trail systems, the CHC will be writing a letter requesting certain forests be on the list for access and trail maintenance for multiple use trails. This letter will be addressed to Matt Fritz, Tom Tyler and others who may be in the determination process of the funding.

NEW BUSINESS:

DEEP: Laurie reported that replacements have been made in DEEP for Supervisors and maintenance people. The list will be available shortly. The DEP Western District Supervisor is now Tammy Talbot. CHC will contact her for a meeting.

CHC: Diane reported that the trails throughout the state have been devastated due to Hurricane Irene and the October snow storm, Alfred. Large trees and debris block any access to many of the trails and that they are unsafe for travel. Diane reported that over 400 volunteer hours have been reported of trail clean ups around the state by the Volunteer Horse Patrol members as well as other members of organizations. Equestrians are also working on town and land trust properties to help clear trails.

Also brought up for discussion was the recent study completed on the Economic value of CT state's parks. It was stated that more than \$1 billion is underestimated because it did not take into account other user groups out in the forests and parks who do not pay a fee to take a walk, bike or ride trails.

Diane noted that the CHC-VHP has taken statistics since 2003 on the various user groups that they have encountered out on the trails and in our parks for the past 9 years and that these figures would have been a viable source for the study. In the past, the logs and reports were sent to the supervisors of the parks and forests as well as the district managers and to Hartford officials, but there was never any feedback from them. These reports and logs are still accessible should the Economic Study be expanded to find the value of trails utilized other user groups or DEEP wish to view them.

She also noted that the study mentioned that these "unaccountable" user groups "spend money on food, gas, equipment and gear to utilize trails" and that the horse industry is estimated to bring in 333 million dollars a year to CT's economy according to a 1997 study done by the University of CT .

Diane also brought up the question as to where the past EAC meeting notes should be filed. Leslie mentioned that when she was doing the meeting notes for the CT Greenways Council, she sent copies to the Secretary of the State. She will find out where these should be sent. In the meantime, Laurie said she will put them in an Archives file on the website.

CFPA: Leslie asked that CHC get the news out about National Trails Day and to share the 2012 CT Trails Day Event Registration Flyer to equestrian organizations. The deadline is January 31st. Leslie noted that it has been awhile since equestrian organizations have posted their events in the CT Trails Day Booklet. Diane mentioned that this was due mostly because of the early date to get the information into the booklet deters a lot of organizations, since they make most of their

event plans in January and February and that calls from numerous people in the past reading the booklet's event asking if horses were available to ride. Meg will send out the flyer to the CHC membership list.

Leslie also mentioned that Kip Bergstrom, Deputy Commissioner of the Commission of Economic & Community Development is looking for videos of people utilizing trails in CT and the horse community is encouraged to send videos that will go up on u-tube.

2012 MEETING DATES:

Tuesday 6:00PM: March 13th, June 12th, September 11th and December 11th.

ADJOURNMENT:

7:50 PM. Motion by Jan, 2nd Meg.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Diane Ciano

Equine Advisory Council Member