



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

Meeting Minutes for June 14th, 2012

Attending:

Meg Sautter, Ruth Beardsley, Laurie Giannotti, Judy Beliveau, Amy Stegall, Diane Ciano and Jan Collins.
Excused: Leslie Lewis.

Call To Order:

The meeting was held at the Northeast Utilities Building in Berlin. Meeting called to order at 6:26 PM.

Review Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes of March 13, 2011 were reviewed, edited and accepted. (The date for the next meeting was June 14th not the 12th). Motion by Diane to accept as corrected, Meg 2nd, Motion carried.

Web Page for EAC Update:

Laurie updated the new EAC's meeting nights (Thursday's) and links to the DEEP web pages for Trails and Outdoor Recreation info. She will add the legislative update on the Trails Bill. She will continue to work on the website as time permits regarding other additions previously mentioned in the March Meeting notes.

STATE PARK & FOREST Updates:

Lost Silver mine Horse Camp Update:

Laurie gave the Specs for the solar toilets from Scott Dawley. CHC will purchase the materials and DEEP will provide the tanks and build the toilets. Diane will make arrangements with Supervisor Lori Lindquist as to when and where the supplies will be delivered.

Diane reported that 28 camp posts were put in, campsites cleaned and 8 brochure holders were placed on the Kiosk with informational material as a National Trails Day Event. CHC-VHP held a campout, workday (in the rain), trail ride/trail clearing and a Blessing of the Horse Patrol that weekend.

NATCHAUG SF. Update:

Diane reported that Jean Morrison (CHC-VHP) member has marked the 5 & 10 mile loop trails.

GOODWIN SF. Update:

Jan will submit a map to the Friends of Goodwin and Committee as a proposal for a suggested route connecting the two forests as a 15 mile multi use loop trail system. More discussion is needed before CHC will donate money for a Kiosk, hitching post and possible trail improvements.

PACHAUG SF. Update:

Diane reported that some of the markers have been put up in the forest, but it has not been completed.

SHENIPSIT SF. Update:

Jan reported on marking of the Trail System:

A Loop (Soapstone) - completed

B & C Loop (Soapstone) – not completed

A – B & C Loop (Bald Mountain) – not completed

The maps are available at Kiosks and on line. The Sportsman’s Gun Club property was taken out of the marked loop. Reddington Rock Riding Club would need to ask permission to use that trail section as it is on private property.

LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION:

Amy reports that CHC worked with Representative DebraLee Hovey and the DEEP on language modifications to H.B. No. 5262 **AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF CERTAIN TRAILS AND AREAS FOR EQUINE USE. The legislation passed in the special session.** "Sec. 501. Section 23-10c of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2012*) The language protects equestrian access on all multi use trails except as noted and strengthens protections for horseback riding.

HB 5262 (as amended by House “A”)*

AN ACT CONCERNING EQUESTRIAN USE ON CERTAIN TRAILS ON STATE PARK AND FOREST LANDS.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to allow equestrians to use all, instead of designated, multi-use trails in state parks and forests, unless he specifically prohibits such use. It requires that before he decides to prohibit equestrians from a trail historically used for that purpose, he must consult with the Equine Advisory Council. This council was created by law in 2007 to help DEEP study the issue of preserving equine trails in Connecticut.

The bill stipulates that (1) it does not prohibit other public uses of the trails and (2) DEEP's action is not to be considered an expansion of the trails. It also explicitly allows the commissioner to temporarily close a multi-use trail for safety reasons or to protect natural resources.

*House Amendment “A” repeals the law that requires the DEEP commissioner to designate trails in state parks and forests for horseback riding.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2012

SPECIFIED TRAILS UNDER CURRENT LAW

The bill eliminates current law, which requires the DEEP commissioner to (1) designate trails in state parks and forests for horseback riding and (2) preserve the following trails for equine use:

1. Larkin State Park trails (Middlebury, Oxford, and Southbury);
2. Airline State Park trails – south and north (Colchester, Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon, Pomfret, Putnam, and Windham);
3. Hop River State Park trails (Andover, Bolton, Columbia, and Coventry);
4. Moosup Valley State Park trails (Plainfield and Sterling);
5. Huntington State Park trails;
6. Natchaug State Forest trails; and
7. Cockaponset State Forest trails.

Such preservation does not prohibit non equine uses of the trails and is not considered an expansion of them.

OLD BUSINESS:

TRAIL SURFACE STUDY:

Nothing to report. Ruth will continue to gather information on the study. Laurie suggested that Ruth Contact the Lower CT River Valley Horsemen's Club (LCRVHC) as they have a power point presentation on the trail work that they do and the Middlebury Bridle Lands Association on their trail work.

RORABACK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA:

Diane reports that contact will be made with DEEP Western District Manager Tammy Talbot & DEEP Supervisor, Mort Gunderson for the Topsmead Area regarding parking lot off Swimming Hole Road to be made larger and more accessible by cutting down a2-3 trees that hinder mobility of trailers to park there.

NEW BUSINESS:

QUILLIAN REESERVOIR-NAUGATUCK STATE FOREST - SEYMOUR

Diane reports that there are two interior parking areas in the process at this reservoir – one off Route 313 and the other off Clinton Street. There was previous discussion with DEEP Supervisor (Osborndale Area – Joe Maler) regarding horse trailer parking accessibility. The two parking lots that were observed recently are small, but can be easily made larger to accommodate trailers by cutting down a few large trees. There are pullover areas that possibly could accommodate a horse trailer, but Rte 313 is a very busy fast traveled road and a pull over would not be a safe place to unload a horse. Clinton Street is less travelled, but it would be ideal for trailers to be able to park in an interior lot rather than a roadside pull over. Laurie will contact Tammy Talbot regarding this issue.

DEEP VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:

Diane asked about the DEEP and the Volunteer Program. She has a book of all the applications on VHP members who have filled out DEP applications that needs to get back to DEEP. Laurie will check on the status of the DEEP Volunteer Program and who is in charge.

SPEAKER FOR FUTURE EAC MEETING:

Laurie will contact a Forestry person to attend an EAC meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Thursday, September 13th

ADJOURNMENT:

7:35 PM. Motion by Diane, Ruth 2nd, and Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Diane Ciano

Equine Advisory Council Member