



P.O. Box 57 Durham, CT 06422-0057 13th

DRAFT Meeting Notes for Thursday, June 18, 2020

Call to Order: The meeting was held in the CFPA parking lot -16 Meriden Rd., Rockfall
The meeting called to order at 6:40 PM by Diane Ciano

Attendance: Ron Hocutt, Ruth Beardsley, Ruth Strontzer, Meg Sautter, Diane Ciano,
Danielle Borelli, Eric Hammerling, Laurie Giannotti

Guests: Vevette Greenberg

Excused: 0

Absent: 0

Review Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes of December 12, 2019 were reviewed.

Motion to accept by after corrections by Meg, 2nd Ruth

State Park & Forest Updates:

Natchaug State Forest:

Meg reports, Broken tables piled up, sites overgrown, needs to be mowed, large dead trees still need to come down, toilets are boarded up – one not working and the Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp sign was broken.

Diane spoke with Scott. Natchaug is still closed due to logging and clean-up operations. No camping for a while. DEEP is waiting on loggers to finish clearing, before they can go ahead and get the sites cleared and get it ready. Diane reported broken picnic tables, and one toilet not working. (Toilets are locked until camping opens). Scott said but people can use camp for day parking as long as the loggers are not in there working.

Discussion followed that the logging market has “crashed” and operations are slow in clean up. Laurie will follow up as to when this campground will be cleared and ready for camping. (Camp grounds open up July 8th)

Bissell Trail: Meg reported that she contacted DEEP Supervisor John Guglielmoni. To ask for help in clearing a large downed tree on the trail near the boat launch and some bad erosion. He said the trail that she asked for help in clearing area was not DEEP property. She wrote back to him that this was something that the previous DEEP Supervisor (Vinny) had always considered that state property and would send help when needed. He did not respond back. Laurie informed us that John is no longer in that position.

Laurie informed us that the River Front Recapture recently acquired lands and that the Windsor Locks Greenway is proposing a bridge.

Cockaponset State Forest: Ruth reported that a horse's foot went through a bridge in the Chester/Killingworth area and will make sure the report gets to Alex.

Haddam Meadows: Ruth reported that trees were cleared on the dirt road near Rte. 154 by equestrians.

Machimoodus State Park: Ruth reports that the Friends of Machimoodus and DEEP Jack Hines would like to see the vista cleared.

Valley Rail Road:Ruth reported that horses can use the trails as long as they clean up the manure.

Mohawk State Forest: Ruth Strontzer reported that logging has stopped. Some of the trails they used have been affected but are still passable.

Roraback Wildlife Management Area (Harwinton): Meg reports trails are clean & green

Salmon River State Forest: No report

Other Trail reports:

Hurd State Park: Ruth reported that the logging operation left huge piles of stone in the parking lot. Trailers are now parking along the road because of this.

The George Dudley WMA adjacent to this park goes through Ever Source power lines. These trails that cross them are now covered with 6-8" rip raff that makes them impassable by horse or by foot or bike travel. Ruth will inform Dave .

Larkin Bridle Trail: Diane reports lots of illegal use on trail and private lands of the Middlebury Land Trust. People are taking apart stone walls to get through, ripping up of trails and camping. CHC is communicating with the Middlebury Police, DEEP Hot Line and Middlebury Bridle Lands Association, creating reports. Most of the illegal use is in the Wooster Street and South Street area. People are moving boulders to get vehicles on the trail. DEEP Southford Fall Robert Poplis, has been helpful and has moved back the boulders a couple of times. They are not big enough and do not have enough to block the South St. entrance. We need larger and more boulders at this crossing. We are asking the Middlebury Police Chief Dabbo, for the approval of the Police Commission and/or the Town of Middlebury to move the new yellow road signs on Shaddock Road, Middlebury, to be relocated as it causes an extremely dangerous hazard for horses. The location of the yellow sign prevents horses from walking on the grass when they enter or exit the

section of the Larkin State Bridle Trail that goes to Wooster Road. There is a very simple solution to this problem. First, the Larkin Trail sign should be moved from its current location, across to the opposite side of the road. The yellow sign can then be moved to where the Larkin Trail sign was located but, if possible, a foot further away from the road as it is a larger sign so takes up more room. This will allow horses to walk safely on the grass verge and not have to walk into the road to pass the drain.

Diane has not heard back from Nathan Hale or Tammy Talbot regarding parking lot that monies were established for or putting up multi-use signs that he requested. Ruth Beardsley reported her encounter while running on the trail. She passed a suspicious person with a hoodie walking off the trail toward MBLA private lands with a wire hoop. This was reported to MBLA and there was a follow by their members. All reports were compiled by Diane and mailed both to the DEEP and the Middlebury Police.

Laurie said to contact both of them Nathan and Tammy again regarding unanswered questions. She also suggested contacting Robert Poplis to ask if he can put larger and more boulders in his budget for some of these crossings.

CHC VHP Report:

Volunteer Horse Patrol Statistics for 2019

For 2019, we had a total of 1,070 patrols. There were 2,053 Patrol Hours logged saving the state and other and management entities \$40,034.00 for 2019 alone !

In the 17 years the CHC-VHP Program provided \$846,944.00 in service hours. This was accomplished through 43,433 hours of patrols and maintenance. Total # of patrols 21,948

Legislation:

Eric reported that 3 million dollars has been authorized by the Legislature, but has not gotten on the Bond Commission. We are waiting on Governor Lamont to bring this to the Bond Commission and the DEEP to ask for proposals.

Old Business:

1. 4th Congressional District appointed by the House Republican Leader:

Vevette Greenberg has applied for the position and sent in all her paperwork in January. Several phone calls to **Themis Klarides** has not been returned. Discussion is that she is not running again, so may be postponing the appointment to the next candidate. Awe should still be trying to contact her. Meg found her home address and will mail out Vevette's paperwork to her again.

New Business:

Proposed Horse Camps in CT :

March 26th, 2020 - Diane reported about the meeting regarding getting new camp sites in Cockaponset State Forest & Sunrise & Devil's Hop Yard State Parks

Brian Wilson, State Parks Assistant Director & Scott Dawley, District Manager East

were invited, but could not attend. Alex Sokolow- Cockaponset, Jack Hine- Gillette Unit Manager and Laurie Giannotti were there in attendance along with the members of CT Horse Council, CT Equine Advisory Council, CT Trail Rides Association, Lower CT River Valley Horsemen Club, Bridle Path Conservancy, Cheshire Horse Council and & L&G Riding Club.

Ruth - presenting the results of the : **CT DEEP Sponsored Horse Campground Questionnaire**

- *Questions were created by DEEP to find out if there is any interest in establishing other horse camps more towards the center of the state. Currently the only camping locations allowing horses on state lands are located in the eastern portion of the state.*
- *The survey questions were created by DEEP and monitored by Dr. Jenifer Nadeau, Associate Professor – UCONN Equine Extension Specialist which showed 100% in favor of horse campgrounds in the central CT.*

The Horse Camping Survey that was done last year regarding the results from CT Residents who responded 100% in favor to the questions that DEEP provided.

Diane followed through with Scott & Jack by phone a couple of times. Recent communication from Scott:

Sunrise State Park: NO camping until the state has opened up camping. It may be a while before discussion to create a new campsite there. Scott said to work with Jack Hines for continued use by permission to park in the field.

A report by was sent to both Scott & Jack. In part: “ .. Our conclusion after the meeting with you is that I think you would agree is that the Sunrise field area that we looked at is the ideal place for a campground open to horseback riders “in our lifetime”. There have been several successful campouts there already. The other back end would be the ideal location, but would require a lot of work and money to make it happen. In the meantime, the equestrians would be very appreciative to utilize the field area. This is very primitive camping, where people would be self-sufficient with no real amenities or cost to the state. The only thing that we would ask that the hole at the back end of the field be properly be filled in so that it can be utilized for trailers. I know you mentioned fencing it off, but I think making it safe and usable would be the better way to accommodate the campers. We would like to discuss this more with you at a time that is convenient for you.”

Cockaponset State Forest – Weber Woods & Pattaconk:

Diane reported that Scott said Alex is “on board” for possible camping there.

Devil’s Hop Yard State Park: Ruth, Meg & Diane met with Jack Hine who showed us a possible site for camping on the newly acquired DEEP 300-acre property on Mitchell Rd. The house and garage were taken down. The barn was left up. Meg and Vevette have ridden that area several times and have discovered trails that connect to the East Haddam Open Space (Lena Preserve). Meg’s report included:

“ There is not a lot of room to park large trailers. We suggest using this area for “Day Use” and utilizing the field across the street from where the house has been ‘leveled’. I met the Eastern District maintenance man, Jason, and had a very nice conversation. He thinks

the leveled field is much more amenable to running power. The power box is on the same side of the street with the field. The barn has a power line running to it, but it would need outlets all around it for the trailers to hook into. This field would be more suitable as a camping area and we would like to open up this idea for further communication.

The best access point for trails is directly across from where the house used to be. It was obviously used at one time for vehicles, it's quite wide and has tire tracks. This 'trail' runs south and ends in a loop. Walking and horseback riding are easy here, even without a 'trail'.

On speaking with Scott, he felt that the Mitchell Rd. was steep and narrow for traffic. We do not agree that this would be a problem, since there are only 4 houses on the road and there would not be constant traffic that would interfere with utilizing this town road. Scott also mentioned that with all the regulations in place, that it will be very difficult to establish a new camp site and offered the Youth campsite in the state park as a place that has already been established. At this time, we feel the area is too small, the trails in that area, are used by other user groups going through it, very active, rough & rocky and mostly are not conducive to horseback riding trails. We would definitely want the DEEP to go through the "hoops" to make a horse camp in Cockaponset, Sunrise and the newly acquired land on Mitchell Rd. Scott said that he is willing to discuss this further.

Proposed letter addressing Hop River Trail Issues: – Diane presented a draft letter addressing a person's concern about horse manure on the Hop River Trail. It was addressed to Laurie Giannotti who forwarded it to Diane. There have been reports both on the Bolton Notch and Coventry section of the trail. The issue was discussed at the recent CHC meeting along with Dr. Jen Nadeau (UCONN) and letters from Stacey Stearns (CT Greenways Council) and ideas to help alleviate the situation came forward. Diane asked that the letter also include it was coming from CHC, EAC and the CT Greenways Council. The letter was discussed and will be revised before it goes out.

- 1. FAREWELL and THANK YOU to Ruth Beardsley** – The EAC recognized and thanked Ruth for her service on EAC since 2010. Ruth was appointed to represent equestrians in the 3rd Congressional District. Ruth was instrumental in researching and creating the Multi-Use Surface Study that is on the EAC & CHC websites to help planners of trails and greenways with information on various trail surfaces for multi users, their cost, maintenance and environmental impact. Throughout her 10 years of service to the EAC, she has been such a wonderful resource to EAC. She will be missed.

2020 Meeting Dates: March 19, June 18, September 17 & December 17th

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn the meeting by Meg, 2nd Danielle at 8:08 pm.