



CONNECTICUT EQUINE ADVISORY COUNCIL

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

Meeting Notes for Thursday, June 20, 2019

Call to Order: The meeting was held at CFPA Library -16 Meriden Rd., Rockfall

The meeting called to order at 6:33 by Diane

Attendance: Diane Ciano, Meg Sautter, Eric Hammerling (CFPA) Laurie Giannotti (DEEP),

Guest: Ruth Strontzer

Excused: Fred Mastele, Ruth Beardsley

Absent: David Frazzinelli,

Review Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes of March 21, 2018 were reviewed. Motion to accept
by Meg 2nd Laurie.

State Park & Forest updates

Natchaug State Forest: DEEP Laurie Giannotti reported that logging at the camp is in progress now and will be done in approximately 2 weeks. She gave us two DEEP officials to call to confirm when the camp is open and CHC will send out the notice.

Bissell Trail: Meg Sautter reported on the Bissell Trail (Windsor Meadows State Park. The trail conditions remain the same - badly eroded in some areas and is not safely passable in some of the areas. You can not connect both ends anymore (Windsor Boat Launch to Loomis Chaffee). Eversource is upgrading the trail from the Boat launch to the power lines. Meg said one of the connecting areas that is not passable is past the power lines and closer to Loomis Chaffee School. Meg said she did get a contact from the school, but the person was just making a report. Laurie said to contact the DEEP Supervisor, John Guglielmoni.

Naugatuck State Forest Trails in Beacon Falls area: Meg Sautter reported at the entrance of Rte 42, if you take a right across the bridge, there is a number of large trees down. One tree in particular is blocking the trail and it can not be crossed over safely due to jagged branches sticking out of the tree. Laurie will report this to the area supervisor.

Ruth Strontzer reported on several state parks and trails:

Sunrise & Machimoodus State Park: Ruth Strontzer (CTRA) reported that the trails are in good shape. Casey Jackson is the seasonal supervisor. A Memorial Ride in honor of Ginger Tullai was held on Sunday, April 7th. Donations were collected for the Friends of Machimoodus to reestablish the old

rock gardens that Ginger Tullai was intending to do as a project there. Amount raised was \$425.00. Over \$2,200.00 has been raised to date for the Friends of Machimoodus.

CTRA organized an over night camp out & trail ride June 7,8 & 9. Riders were thrilled to find "Fairy Folk" & homes decorated throughout the trails on the trees

Hurd State Park: The entrance road into the park is in rough shape. There is a massive amount of tree clearing going on. The trails, however are in good shape.

George Dudly Seymour Park: Trails are in good shape. There is a massive amount of tree clearing going on. An organized CTRA ride encountered a large group of people (20) who all had loose dogs. Three of the dogs went after the horses, but after speaking with the group, all was settled.

Higganum Meadows: Sadly the meadows are being lost, due to invasive species and beavers.

Mohawk State Forest: Trails are in good shape to ride to the tower and pond area, except for one that needs clearing. The information sign that shows the different mountain ranges that can be seen is gone.

Salmon River State Forest: There is a scheduled work day to clear trails in the forest by equestrians.

DEEP Laurie Giannotti reported on DEEP trail work being done in **Cockaponset State Forest:** DEEP now has a Regional Trail Crew (all women) that are working on trail clearing in Cockaponset. They have been working on the green trail and making grade dips, working on wet marsh spots of trails, in Weber Woods area and now are working in Millers Pond and Pattaconk Lake. Ruth mentioned that there is a washed out trail that had been fixed previously off Filley Road. Laurie said that this crew can be sent elsewhere to fix trails.

Ruth Strontzer reported on the Horse Camp Ground Survey results that was done on Line. The results were favorable that a horse camp is wanted. Ruth received the results and shared it with the council: In week 1 - there were 50 responses! - Enough needed for the survey. In week 2 - there were 450 responses!

Laurie suggested that we come up with a summary report and ask for a meeting with the Director of State Parks to address a plan and partner with the state. She also suggested that contact our legislators to get involved in helping us to establish a horse camp ground.

* Draft report was added below)

Legislative Discussion

Eric updated us on the outcome of several Bills previously discussed by the council this session and action to be taken by the public.

The CT General Assembly will be holding its "special session" to consider Connecticut's FY 2020-21 bonding priorities, so it's essential for people to make contact with their House and Senate State Legislators before July to support bonding for the Recreational Trails & Greenways Grants Program.

HB 7157 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR BIKEWAY PATHS, RECREATIONAL TRAILS AND GREENWAYS.

Statement of Purpose: To provide funding for bikeway paths, recreational trails and greenways

...For the purposes described in subsection (b) of this section, the State Bond Commission shall have the power, from time to time to authorize the issuance of bonds of the state in one or more series and in principal amounts not exceeding in the aggregate **three million dollars**. (b) The proceeds of the sale of said bonds, to the extent of the amount stated in subsection (a) of this section, shall be used by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for the purpose of establishing a Connecticut bikeway, pedestrian walkway, recreational trail and greenway grant program for grants-in-aid to municipalities, private organizations that are exempt from taxation ...

He also shared a letter for us to use as an example:

ACTION is required email or phone call to your Legislators ASAP to make the difference. between bonding being authorized or not. If bonding is not authorized, there will be no bonding available for additional Recreational Trails & Greenways grants. See next page for an example

Dear Representative _____ or Senator _____,

As your constituent, I am writing to ask you to support bonding for the CT DEEP Recreational Trails & Greenways Grants Program at the level of \$3 million in the FY 2020-21 bonding package. This level of bonding (actually \$4 million) was supported unanimously by the Environment Committee and was included in Section 69 of the substitute for S.B. 876.

{Add something about your organization's and/or your interest in supporting recreational trails}

Since 2016, the Recreational Trails & Greenways Program has invested \$10 million into 60 matching grants to municipalities and nonprofits, and has also supported multiple State Park and Forest projects that benefit more than half of all communities statewide.

Unfortunately, there is no remaining bonding authorized to support the continuance of this successful program, despite over \$12 million in funding requests being received in the last grant round alone. Your support of this program is essential!

Recreational trails are one of the best ways that bond funds can be invested. Recreational trails for hiking, running, biking, equestrian, and other uses attract and sustain families and businesses, create healthy communities, and foster a high quality of life. Trails are also a critical part of Connecticut's outdoor recreation infrastructure and economy that generates \$9 billion in consumer spending, \$2.9 billion in wages and salaries in the private sector, \$734 million in state and local tax revenues, and supports 69,000 Connecticut jobs every year.

Please strongly support bonding for this program that is so essential to Connecticut, and thank you in advance for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Name, Title, Organization

HB-7058 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GREENWAYS ACCOUNT.

Statement of Purpose: To ensure that funds obtained from the sale of greenways commemorative license plates are used for the development, construction and maintenance of greenways.

That the general statutes be amended to establish a greenways account, which shall contain any funds obtained from the sale of greenways commemorative number plates and be used for the development, construction and maintenance of greenways in the state.

Note: This bill clarifies that funds generated by the Greenways license plate sales are dedicated to the purpose for which it was established - to be spent on greenways projects rather than be diverted into the General Fund as it unfortunately has been for years. This bill will ensure that the funds that citizens pay out for their vanity plates goes to their intended purpose.

UPDATE: This bill died and will be submitted next year

HB7347 AN ACT EXEMPTING SENIOR CITIZENS AND VETERANS FROM THE PASSPORT TO THE PARKS MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEE

Statement of Purpose: To exempt senior citizens and veterans from the motor vehicle registration fee associated with the Passport to the Parks Program.

This is a bill is controversial and many feel should it not be supported. The Passport to the Parks gives everyone benefits. It can generate up to 14 million dollars on an annual basis. The DEEP Parks and Forests need 18-20 million dollars annually to operate efficiently. Before this funding Parks were getting about 10 million from parking and camping fees, which went into the General Fund – Not all of that was given back to DEEP operations.

UPDATE: This bill died and funding for 2020 & 2021 was kept clean

Old Business: No reporting

New Business:

Laurie reported that the Equine Advisory Council website is up dated with past meeting notes.

Discussion took place about the CT Greenways Council's Award Ceremony in Simsbury.

The CT Greenways Symposium is planned for October 24th. Stacey Stearns (our CHC representative on the Greenways Council is on the planning committee and will keep us informed.

Ruth Strontzer presented her letter for appointment to the EAC Council along with her bio. She will be sending it to Senator Looney who is her appointee to the council for the 2nd Congressional District. The CT Horse Council and EAC also had letters of recommendations for her to send with her request.

UPDATE: Horse Camp in Connecticut:

UCONN Horse Specialist, Dr. Jenifer Nadeau set up a Survey Monkey to establish data on whether a horse camp is wanted in the state and what amenities equestrians are looking for in order of importance for self contained camping. Ruth worked with DEEP Supervisor Phil to get questions for the survey that DEEP would want to know. There were 8 questions on the survey. It was posted on all equestrian organizations websites & Face Book as well as individuals sharing posts.

1. Would you utilize a horse oriented rustic self-contained overnight camping facility located in the middle of the state of Connecticut in a State Park?

Responses - 100% YES

2. Are you a resident of the state of Connecticut?

Responses: 95% YES 5% NO

3. If not a resident of Connecticut, in what state do you reside?

Responses: NH, VT MA, MI

4. How many nights on average would you stay during your visit?

Responses: 2 nights -48% 3 nights-26% 1 night-15%

5. How many people on average would be in your group?

Responses: 2 people - 33% 4 people -31% 3 people -20%

6. What features would be important to you?

1. Trails
2. Port-a-lets
3. Area to set up a corral
4. Pull through parking

7. What other features not listed here are important to you, if any?

1. Trail map
2. Easy access for large trailers in and out
3. Marked trails
4. Potable water
5. Pull through parking

8 . In what season would you most likely to use the facility?

Score: Fall - 3.11 Summer - 2.99 Spring - 2.85` Winter 1.05

Next meeting: Thursday, September 19, 2019

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn the meeting by Meg 2nd Eric at 7:55 pm.