



## **DRAFT REPORT for Thursday, September 16, 2021**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was held at CFPA, Middletown

The meeting called to order at 6:35 pm by Eric Hammerling

**Attendance:** CHC: Ruth Strontzer, Danielle Borelli, Diane Ciano, Vevette Greenberg (Zoom)

DEEP: Laurie Giannotti CFPA: Eric Hammerling

**Guests:** 0

**Excused:** Ron Hocutt, Meg Sautter

**Review Meeting Minutes:** The meeting minutes of June 17th, 2020 were reviewed. There were two corrections by Laurie & Eric. Motion to accept with corrections by Eric, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruth

### **State Park & Forest Updates:**

**Natchaug State Forest:** Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp. To date, clean up from the Timber harvest has been completed. Camping is allowed, Camp area has been mowed and portable toilets are in place. The well for the horses still remains closed as well as the solar toilets. On speaking with DEEP Eastern District Manager, Scott Dawley, he is still working on getting the well opened for animal use only, as this is an established horse camp where water is needed for the horses. It was designated as non-potable, but communication was not in place of the need for this well for animals when it was shut down.

**Vevette & Diane report:** Both Diane and Vevette met with DEEP Supervisor, Mathew Quinn at the campground in July. He had done a really great job getting the camp in order and improving the campsites and entrances from the back road. He will be working on getting the picnic tables back on the sites (some of them were destroyed), putting in some fire rings and fixing the numbered camp site posts which some were destroyed or buried by the logging operation. He said that sometime in the future, the solar toilets will be fixed and opened and the gates will be put back up.

We discussed utilizing the other side of the back road entrance where the trees were just dropped. We proposed to have these logs moved over to the sides in sections as to create a wood corral type area that could be used by campers for their horses. Some of

this dropped area also blocks off a couple of other trail entrances. He was bringing this idea to Scott.

Diane spoke with Scott recently to confirm this was something DEEP would do. He said that DEEP has a new forester for the area and they plan on cleaning this area up and may have this area opened for people to take wood out of, but leaving the "Fence Corral Idea" in tack. There is still no resolution on getting the well pump installed back in for water for the horses. Scott also mentioned that Matt has been out west fighting the wildfires.

**Bissell Trail – Windsor: Meg reports:** Both attempts at riding/walking Bissell were blocked due to flooding. Not sure on the condition now. Prior ride/walks here showed evidence of tremendous tree fall with obvious go-arounds. The worst part of the trail is a river crossing where a large tree has fallen blocking the crossing spot. Much of this particular area is always muddy and the overgrowth is VERY high. This is an area very near the Loomis Chaffee property line.

**Devil's Hop Yard: Meg reports:** I have not been back to this area. My last complaint concerned the boulders that block what could be a nice trailer parking area. We have been parking down by the barn, which is wet and narrow. The top spot (where the house once stood and is across from the trail entrance) is dry and partly graveled. Hikers park at a smaller spot up the road. This parking spot gets so crowded the vehicle partially block the road causing difficulties for horse trailer passing.

**Roraback Wildlife Management Area (Harwinton): Meg reports:** My last ride at Roraback was in the Spring. We spent a few hours clearing this trail due to a wind storm knocking down many trees. It was passible on my last visit.

**Cockaponset State Forest & Chatfield Hollow State Park:**

Previous discussion was Ruth's report on washed out trails / roads. Ruth wrote a detailed report on the trails and roads that have been washed out and sent an email to Alex and cc Laurie. . Alex is now on vacation. Ruth will follow up when he returns.

**Sunrise State Park: Ruth reports:** I have taken several groups through the Sunrise side of the Park and showed them the areas that had been discussed for camping and there was quite a bit of interest

The Cleaning day on July 10<sup>th</sup> was a great success with about 15 people showing up to work CTRA LCRVHC and the Bridle Conservatory as well as local private horse owners Stella Marh (Pony Club member) was there with her mother as part of Her Environmental Test for Pony Club we got permission for her to post signs at both kiosks about plants toxic to horses and we gave her a Trail courtesy sign which is now posted in the park. Park Supervisor Jack Hine was very pleased with the work done

The Camp Out ( 8/27 – 8/29) was a great success \* camp sites were used the field was allowed to grow for about 3 weeks prior for the horses. 2 Days of trail riding as well as Potluck supper with a campfire. DEEP Supervisor Jack Hine had expressed at a meeting of the Friends of Machimoodus / Sunrise State Park (FoMS) that he would like to reestablish some of the old trails that have not been used as well as opening trails on the Sunrise side. Myself and 2 other CTRA members Donna Santos and Sharron King worked on reopening 3 trails in Machimoodus and during the camp out we used them, including one that takes you almost to Johnsonville Rd. Someone coming in from the Rte. 151 side of the trail has built a bridge out of logs – not horse safe over a brook and set up a deer blind using quads. I plan to tell Jack at the next meeting of the FoMS. Several trails were cleared of downed trees from the storms

**Larkin Bridle Trail:** CHC continues to get reports of illegal use on the trails. The boulders do not stop vehicles from entering. Diane spoke with Tammy Talbott, Western District Supervisor regarding funding for the Rte. 67 parking lot and trail improvements that were in tack for a number of years and has not been done. She said the “ball was dropped” and money has been “borrowed” from this account to fund other projects. There is only \$150,000 left from the funding unless the money comes back. DEEP Supervisor Nathan Hale has not made any proposal or plans to finish the project for a variety of reasons.

Diane also mentioned that she spoke with Nathan over the years regarding the need for a large parking lot for trailers utilizing the South Street entrance as an ideal location. The Rte. 63 parking area can also be made larger as more vehicles use that entrance and it’s harder for trailers to get available parking there. Also, she spoke to Nathan over a year ago about putting up gates on each side of the road crossings to deter motor vehicles from entering while giving access for emergency vehicles. Some of the entrances and exit crossings need improvements. Tammy asked Diane for a report to be sent to her for ideas for priority and she will bring up the discussion with Nathan. Laurie mentioned that there is Recreational Trails money available and a request application needs to be submitted by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Meg sent in her report on the conditions of unsafe crossings of the Trail that should receive priority: There are basically 2 very dangerous crossings. ***The first is at Towantic Hill Rd.*** Heading south from Long Meadow (a private section of the trail) the Towantic Hill Rd. crossing is VERY steep and rocky on both sides. From Long Meadow, the hill climb onto Towantic Hill Rd. is steep and treacherous and dumps you immediately onto the street at a curve with very poor sight lines for oncoming vehicle traffic. Crossing the street and heading down to the trail is narrow, rocky and treacherous. Approaching from either side of Towantic Hill Rd., you must climb a very narrow, steep, rocky hill. From either direction, the sight line is poor and you are immediately in the roadway. With fill on either side of Towantic Hill Rd., you would be able to pause at the top of the hill without being in the roadway, and could then access the possibility of crossing the street safely.

***The second dangerous crossing is Southford Rd (rte 67).*** I have not ridden this section in quite a while. However, heading south from Strongtown Rd. to Southford Rd, requires another treacherous climb ending again in a very busy, heavily trafficked, roadway. Some fill here, and perhaps a small clearing at the top, would ensure a much safer crossing.

### **George D. Seymour & Hurd State Parks & Higganum Meadows Wildlife Management Area**

- *Previous discussion from June: The Higganum Meadows are overgrown with invasive species that have changed the entire meadows. We discussed getting a report together to propose that the DEEP get these fields mowed back to their original way and/or suggest using sheep or goats to help get with rid of the invasive plants.*

Danielle’s report was viewed by all and looks very promising for alternate ways to rid invasive species. The report was sent to Lori Fortin of the Wildlife Division Lori Fortin. (Attached) Laurie Giannotti stated the Eversource is reestablishing these roads in this area.

### **Other Trail Reports:**

**Bluff Point State Park: Ruth reports:** The park’s trails are in fairly good shape. The new Park Supervisor Mike Senyk is doing a great job maintaining the trails brush hogging open some of the trails out near Mumford Cove. Two large sail boats have washed up on the beach during the past storms. They have not been tagged yet. The lower parking lot is in somewhat better shape than last year but still has 2 very large pot holes – truck and trailer size.

**Haddam Meadows State Park: Ruth reports:** The trails at the rear of the park are in good shape. One small downed tree was removed.

**Cockaponset State Forest – Webber’s Woods: Ruth reports:** The LCRVHC has been doing a great job maintaining the trails there. The Hurricane and Tropical Storms caused a bunch of washouts and downed trees, most of which we cleared. There is one foot bridge that has a deadfall washed up partway on to it but it is still passable and the horse bi-pass is un affected.

**Lamentation Mountain State Park, Berlin - Ruth reports:** This park has massive amounts of washouts on the trails going through it from the last several storms. Several trails had to be cleared of downed trees to make them passable. Beautiful riding but you have to pick your way through it because of the washouts. Our ride left from private property in Berlin to ride it and combined power lines, Middletown Land Trust, Lamentation Mountain SP and Pistol Creek Middletown/Berlin town properties and made an almost 8-mile loop. There is no parking for trucks and trailers that I am aware of

**Naugatuck State Forest, Oxford: - Vevette reports:** The trails around the reservoirs are clear, but there are many large downed trees on the connecting trails of the reservoir. On a recent ride she said most are impassable and they had to do a lot of back tracking. Diane will contact western District Supervisor, Tammy Talbot to find out who the DEEP Supervisor is of this forest.

**Goodwin State Forest – Goodwin Visitor Center Area: - Eric reports:** There is a small parking lot for visitors to the Center on Potter Road. Unfortunately, as this area is a popular destination, Horse trailers have been parking on the side of the road across from the center. This is where the septic system is. Laurie suggested an eligible use of Recreational Trails Grant funds is to design and install pull over parking further down Potter road. Eric will contact DEEP Supervisor Matt Quinn to apply for the grant.

### **Legislation:**

Laurie reported that the 3-million-dollar bond for recreational trails is now available. Laurie said all project proposals must be in by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Continued discussion on the DEEP losing its full-time employees due to all the retirements that will be happening from April-June 2022 :

The priority of the DEEP agency with state parks is very low and we need to address the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) advocating for additional funding to replace these positions along with additional staff that has been depleted through the years for “Public Health & Safety”

### **Old Business:**

Continued discussion on the Passports to the Parks

### **New Business:**

**EAC Website:** Laurie updated all new members on the website.

We need an updated picture. Hopefully we will all meet in December to have this done.

Meeting notes of December 2020, June 2021 need to be up on website

Attached Reports for Follow Up:

Cockaponset State Forest- Ruth’s report to DEEP Supervisor Alex Sokolow

Higganum Meadows Wildlife Management Area – Danielle’s report to DEEP Lori Fortin

**Next Meeting Date:** December 16th

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 pm by Eric, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vevette

# Trail Issues including Washouts, Flooding and Trees

Inbox



Ruth Strontzer

Wed, Sep 15, 3:57 PM  
(20 hours ago)

to alexander.sokolow, Deep, bcc: me

Good Afternoon

I was asked by the members of the Connecticut Equine Advisory Council to let you know of a few areas of washouts and trail issues that I have come across in some of the State Parks and Forests that fall in your area. We were advised that there maybe be some monies available to address some of the locations

**Chatfield Hollow SP-** The upper portion of Buck Road that leads up to I believe Tower Rd in Killingworth has a deep washout

**Cockaponset SF -**

The old road portion of Old County Rd that starts on Filley Rd near the tall pines going over towards Cedar Lake Road This has some trees down across it and some very sever washouts on it

The part of the Quinimay Trail that runs between Jericho Rd and Old County Rd In particular the section from where the blue trail crosses the Quinimay out to Old County Rd there are large washouts and trees down along it.

Old Motland Rd where it merges onto Old County Rd, there is a small parking area there The section where it runs alongside Hackney Pond has become overgrown and is now so low that it is continuously flooding. Hikers, Mountain bikers and riders have been using the private land from the neighboring tree farm to get around that section.

I believe it is the orange trail that has an access point off of Filley Rd near the Highway overpass for Rt 9 It crosses a small wooden bridge and goes straight and up and over the ridge, and down the other side. It crosses a second wooden bridge before continuing on to merge with the Quinimay Trail. The portion between the 2 bridges was heavily washed out in a couple of locations.

If you have any questions concerning these locations please contact me and I will try my best to clarify the locations for you

Regards,

Ruth Strontzer

CT Equine Advisory Council Representative  
for the Second Congressional District