



## MEETING REPORT – Thursday, June 20, 2024

**Call to Order:** The meeting was held at Eversource Community Meeting Room, Berlin  
The meeting called to order at 6:43 pm by Diane Ciano

**Attendance:** Diane Ciano, Meg Sautter, Ruth Strontzer

**Guests:** Denise Ciano

**Excused:** Vevette Greenberg, Danielle Borelli

**Review Minutes:** The meeting minutes of March 21, 2024 were reviewed.

Motion to accept by Denise Ciano, 2<sup>nd</sup> Meg Sautter

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

*Meg Sautter reports:*

**Larkin Bridle Trail:** The DEEP, Southbury Selectmen, and DOT met on the trail crossing of Rte. 67. Attending was Kim Bradley, Jeremy Hall (intern director of state parks) Anna Bergeron (CT DOT Bike & Ped Committee and Chris Roberts (DOT). CHC is waiting to hear of any decision they make regarding a crossing light.

Diane Ciano, Meg Sautter, Denise Ciano, and Cowboy Ken participated with the Middlebury Selectwoman, Jennifer Mahr, and Naugatuck police department in a photo shoot on trail safety with equestrians, bikers and hikers and how to share the trail. DEEP created an online survey that CHC has posted on the website and sent out to all equestrian organizations. This survey is ongoing and equestrians are asked to enter any illegal activity on state trails.

Diane Ciano, Meg Sautter and Vevette Greenberg met with Western District Manager, Tammy Talbot on the Larkin Bridle Trail to discuss footing, gates and parking spots for trailers.

They also went to areas of Naugatuck State Forest with discussions on expanding a parking lot for trailers. Tammy will be putting this in a report to Hartford. *A follow up with Tammy will be made during the summer months.*

**Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp:** The CT Horse Council hosted a trail ride and Campout at Natchaug State Forest. The well pump that was installed was not working. We met with DEEP Supervisor Matt Quinn who will be making two (possibly 3 more pull through sites, putting back up the gate to the entrance of the pull through sites. He will be opening up and clearing up another site. DEEP will be replacing the solar toilets with cement structures that look like wood this fall. The Kiosk was filled with CHC brochures and Maps of the 5 -10- & 15-mile loops. Matt informed us that DEEP as of next year, the camp will be having overnight fees that equestrians will have to reserve their site through Reserve America. Day use will not be allowed in the camp and separate parking lot will be outside the entrance. CHC will contact Hartford in this decision.

A BIG Thank you to Edna Liberty and her crew for replacing all the markers that were missing from the downed trees.

*EAC - CHC Trail Report – Ruth Strontzer reports:*

**George Dudley Seymour SP:** The trails to the left of the road have some small trees down and a small foot bridge completely unusable by horses is over a water crossing. The unmarked Valley trail that comes out on the old paved road has numerous trees down on it the one at the brook crossing is problematic. The only way around it is very muddy, even hikers and mountain bikes are having an issue at that spot. Some of the branches on the downed tree have been cut back to void most of the mud, but it still needs work.

**Higganum Wildlife Management Area:** The meadow was brush hogged last year but even though there is more grass in some areas it has grown back heavily with grape vines, weeds, ferns and Russian Olive bushes. It may need a control burn. The beavers are flooding out more of the southern end of the meadow. It's getting very muddy.

**Cockaponset SF:** *(Chris Martin is Supervisor of this area)*

**Northern Section – Haddam** the section located between Filley Rd, Jericho Rd and Beaver Meadow Rd and bounded by Rte. 9 has had some clean up. However, the orange trail running between Filley road and the yellow Quinimay trail still has numerous trees down on it There is a bridge over a small brook on the access trail by the Rte. 9 overpasses on Filley Rd that leads to the orange trail. There was debris built up in front of it, forcing the water to over flow and wash out the trail and is weakening the bridge itself the boards on top, at least 2 need to be replaced and are starting to flex with weight on them of them. The Quinimay (yellow) running from Jericho to Beaver Meadow has a tree down on it. The purple trail running from the youth horse camp on Filley over to the Quinimay has several trees down on it.

**Southern Section – Chester**

The Quinimay Trail (Red Trail) in the area Old County Rd south to the lake was in fair shape. There are a couple of very large trees down that we made bi-passes around. There are several wash outs. June 1<sup>st</sup> . A crew from LCRVHC and the BCP addressed a couple of areas on the red trail that had previously been rerouted because of erosion. People had started using the old section again causing more issues. The cut throughs have been blocked off; you can't even tell there had been a trail there in the past. People are now staying on the trail instead of using the old cut through.

**Machimoodus Sunrise SP:** Most of the trails are in good shape. The carriage trail that runs along the river from the boat launch area over to the old landing strip area has a tree down on it. The red trail which is I think is in Sunrise has numerous trees down on it. The trail leading from the lower to upper vista is being used a lot now that a new switch back section was put in on it.

New bridges have been built on the yellow trail and the orange trail behind the pond both on multi use trails but again unsafe for horses. They are only 2 ft wide and not anchored. These bridges still have not been addressed. However, I spoke to the park supervisor and he now has his seasonals and is waiting his turn for the trail crew. He plans to clear around two of the bridges for suitable water crossings for the horses and may have one bridge rebuilt over the muddy area behind the ponds (orange trail) to accommodate the horses at that crossing.

There was a volunteer work day May 18<sup>th</sup> in Sunrise – It rained but the Park Supervisor was very impressed with the job that was done by CTRA and LCRVHC.

**Chatfield Hollow SP:** Had a major Paving project going on, At this point they are not keeping up on the trails with trees down on the red trail and the blue-white trail. Again, there are new foot bridges that are not fit for horses or heavy people. One on the red trail that had been reported before appears to have been removed. Upper Buck Rd. still has washed out areas but some of the worse areas look like they were addressed then washed out again.

**Wadsworth Falls SP:** Trails are becoming a mess with washouts, and trees down. The red, white and yellow trails have downed trees and washouts. The road leading from the parking lot out to Laurel Brook Rd. has some very bad washouts on it. This is the one that has the beautiful long curving stone bridge on it. It appears to have been repaired and washed out again in the same area. The Vortex trails is being used by bikes hikers trail runners and equestrians still..

**Mooween State Park:** Kim Bradley informed the Council that DEEP created a parking area to access this park. The address is 166 Camp Mooween Road, Lebanon, CT

### Horse Camping:

**Sunrise SP:** - *A follow up with DEEP will be made during the summer months:*

Either the big fields or over the paved road behind the tennis courts would be great for camping. There are 5 wells on the property for water. The Park Supervisor would love to have the field turned into horse camping and even spoke of maybe a rail fence to keep people on the trail and not cut through the field.

CTRA had to purchase a special use permit this year. There was no record of them having camped there before but DEEP was very helpful in getting the permit through (22 pages, site plan, map with site marked out, agenda, insurance cert with DEEP listed as Added Insured). Camping will be June 21 – 23.

### **Other possible camping areas:**

**Cockaponset SF:** At the top of Filley Rd south of Jericho Rd both sides had public camp sites in the past. There was a well there that was capped years ago in the 80's

**Cockaponset SF:** The old Youth horse camp off of Filley Rd has a well for water. There were three side shelters there at one time but they were torn down. There is a small parking area near the road that would need to be enlarged, but plenty of room for multiple sites that could be made for pull through.

**Hurd SP** - They have youth camping there already and have a large field with a gated entrance, well and outhouse.

**Mohawk** – They already have youth camping there with 3 sided shelters and Outhouses.

### Legislation:

Bill No. SB 337 AN ACT CONCERNING STREET TAKEOVERS AND THE ILLEGAL USE OF CERTAIN VEHICLES. AN ACT CONCERNING STREET TAKEOVERS AND THE ILLEGAL USE OF CERTAIN VEHICLES was passed.

To (1) revise provisions regarding forfeiture of certain illegally used vehicles, (2) authorize municipalities to adopt an ordinance related to street takeovers, (3) establish penalties for driving while a person's license is suspended or revoked due to a violation related to a street takeover, and (4) establish a grant program to provide funds to municipalities to enforce laws related to street takeovers and the illegal use of certain vehicles.

### Out Reach / Education:

**Airline Trail SP: Colchester** A Bike Education event took place on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at the River Road section. A table was set up to educate bikers on trail courtesy when approaching horses. Diane Ciano & Danielle Borrelli displayed the blind spots of a horse's vision on a model horse, the multi-use trail Yield signs on a horse model horse, along information on dogs on a leash.

**Machimoodus / Sunrise SP:** A "Dogs on Leash" educational event took place on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. Diane Ciano & Danielle Borrelli displayed the same educational material as above. Danielle also created business cards and attached a bag of dog treats to it. CHC paid for the cards. The event went very well.

**Hurd SP:** The Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> Bike Education was cancelled due to weather conditions. A new contact volunteer for Stage 1 Cycling Juniors Team is James Pulaski who will help out with future events. The team meets for practice every Friday during the school year from September to June at the Pavilion at 6:00 pm.

*Discussion if we can get a horse there for either 6/21 or 6/28.*

**ACO & First Responder Training:** Danielle Borrelli & CHC Board member, Laurianne Goulet will continue to work on the program to gather information for presentations.

**National Trails Day Events:** Three organizations participated in the weekend of June 1 & 2 to celebrate this and promote equestrians working to patrol and maintain trails.

The Lower CT River Valley Horsemen and Bridle Path Conservancy held a work party on the trails of Pataconk Reservoir in Cockaponset State Forest and had a lunch for the participants, The Reddington Rock Riding Club held a Breakfast, Blessing of the Mounts and Trail Ride in Shenipsit State Forest.

The CT Horse Council hosted a camp out and trial ride with trail clearing at the Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp in Natchaug State Forest.

**CT Greenways Council Recognition Awards and NTD Kick -off Event:**

The event took place at the Riverfront Recapture in Hartford. The Horse Council of Granby received a CT Greenways Award in recognition of their dedication to promoting the values of CT Greenways and the importance of their stewardship. President Billie McNealey, Holly & Jay Ely and were there to receive the award. The Granby Horse Council will celebrate its forty-fifth anniversary this year. The organization continues to promote and protect the rights of horse owners in Granby and surrounding towns. Part of their mission is to educate its members and the public about the value of equines in our communities.

**THE TRAILS SAFE PASSING PLAN:** Diane contacted the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council – Colorado and received written permission for the CT Horse Council to use their copyright of “**THE TRAILS SAFE PASSING PLAN (TSPP) STOP! SPEAK and STAND BACK**

The Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back educational resource has been published by the Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) in Lexington, Kentucky. ELCR is working with the Trails are Common Ground (TaCG) campaign. <https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/trails-safe-passing-plan-tspp.html>

The Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) STOP! SPEAK and STAND BACK is a safety action plan to educate on what to do when encountering people with horses on the trails. The Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back allows you to safely share the trails and is helpful for all trail users, including horses, dogs and children.

**Old Business / Discussion:**

**EAC Website:** Update of 2023 meeting notes needs to be put up on website along with 2024 meeting dates and location. New Location, address and time needs to be changed

Trail markers needed Can DEEP purchase? Kim will check into getting signs and markers.

**Goodwin SP:** Update needed on parking for trailers. Discussion on possible parking alongside Potter Rd. near the Airline Trail. Kim mentioned that this may be a DOT project?

**CT Forest & Park Association:** Diane met the new Executive Director, Andy Bicking at the recent Greenways Awards Event. He said he was not able to attend the 6/20 meeting, but looks forward to meeting the council members at our next meeting in September

**EAC Appointment: 5<sup>th</sup> District:** Vevette Greenberg reported that she did contact the office of Bob Duff, regarding an EAC appointment for Denise Ciano. She also contacted her Representative. Neither person got back to her. June will be one year without having him appoint someone to the council, even though we have recommended Denise Ciano for the position.

**DEEP – Hartford Meeting:** The meeting date took place on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am. with leadership of the Environmental Conservation Branch of DEEP that include the three divisions Forestry, Wildlife Management, State Parks & Land Acquisition to discuss horse camps, parking areas, signs, “Passive Recreation”, etc. This was a good conversation and plans to go forward with our requests.

A letter was sent thanking DEEP for their time and suggestions. In this letter was information on horses in wetlands and studies of horses on trails in wildlife management areas and how they

have little or no effect on wildlife. We have yet to hear back as to whether DEEP will consider changing their policy that excludes horses as “Passive Recreation”. Since then, we have met with DEEP Western District Manager (see *Larkin Bridle Trail report*). We have yet to set a meeting with the Eastern District Supervisor regarding issues and campgrounds in this District.

DEEP Illegal Use Survey: CHC would like to continue to promote this survey on identifying the locations of illegal users on our state lands. How can we get an update on the survey?

### Upcoming Events:

#### No Child Left Inside Events

*CHC will promote these events and encourage equestrians to attend:*

- **August 3, 2024 Dinosaur Day at Dinosaur State Park** in Rocky Hill, CT from 9 am to 3pm
- **August 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>- Perseids Campout** with the NCLI, the Last Green Valley and the Friends of Pachaug State Forest

### Next Meeting Date:

The next Equine Advisory Council meeting will be on Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm Eversource Community Room, 107 Selden St., Berlin, CT

Other meeting for the year: Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>

### Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm by Meg Sautter 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruth Strontzer