



MEETING REPORT - Thursday, March 16, 2023

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

The meeting called to order at 6:15 pm by Diane

Attendance: Diane Ciano, Meg Sautter, Ruth Strontzer, DEEP- Kim Bradley

Guests: Denise Ciano, Cathy Fellows

Excused: Eric Hammerling (sent in Legislative report), Vevette Greenburg, Danielle Borelli

Review Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes of December 15th 2022 were reviewed.

Motion to accept with corrections by Ruth, 2nd Kim

State Park & Forest Updates:

Ruth Strontzer reports on the following parks:

Machimoodus State Park / Sunrise State Park:

Trails are in good shape. There is one large tree on Top Road that needs to be taken down. There was a bypass made around the gate so that horses can go around. There is no supervisor yet to be replaced but the maintainer, Peter Wilson is doing a great job. DEEP will have a clearing day to kill off weeds. There will be a workday in Sunrise for clearing in June.

The Friends of Machimoodus is having a Spring Fling on March 19th. The equestrian community will be represented at their table: CT Trail Rides Association, Lower CT River Valley Horsemen's Club, Bridle Path Conservancy, CT Horse Council/Volunteer Horse Patrol and the CT Valley Driving Club.

Cockaponset State Forest:

Haddam/Killingworth upper section - there are lots of trees down in the logging area. The Quinimay Trail has a wash out and damage done by trucks and motorcycles. Weber Woods – the beavers are gone.

Higganum Meadows State Park:

DEEP is keeping up on mowing and downed trees have been cleared

The Preserve:

Discussion on DEEP helping to work with LCRVHC & BPC to replace a bridge. Approximate cost is \$2,225.00 for material.

Salmon River State Forest: Yellow Diamond markers are needed to mark the trail from Rte. 16 to Day Pond State park. Diane said that CHC purchased yellow markers and gave them to Celeste Santos and Edna Liberty. There may be some left. The Grayville area has a parking area for trailers.

Other Parks or Forest reports:

Goodwin State Forest: Parking for trailers is an issue. Diane noted that a few years ago there was grant money to widen one side of the road so that trailers can park along the side. A follow up letter to Kim Bradley should be sent.

Natchaug State Forest: Diane contacted Matt Quinn. There is an approval to put the water pump back in at the Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp. Matt said that there would be money that we would have to come up with and to let Kim Bradley know about this. Kim said she would check into DEEP funding to replace the cost off the water pump ad installation.

Naugatuck State Forest: Vevette reports trails are in good shape except for two large downed trees. Kim said they need exact point of where any trees are down.

Pachaug Stae Forest: Bridge needs to be repaired. Kim mentioned that maybe the DEEP seasonal trail team can do this.

The Preserve: DEEP will work with the Bridle Path Conservancy and Lower CT River Valley Horsemen's Club with the cost of materials, approximately \$2,225.00.

Roraback WMA:

Legislation:

Eric sent in his Legislative report:

The Governor's Budget for FY 2024-25 was released last month. [Here's a link to it.](#) There were a few items in the Governor's Budget proposal that we support strongly, e.g. \$5 million/year (in both FY 2024 & 2025) in bonding for the recreational trails & greenways program. There is also \$500,000 for all-terrain wheelchairs for the State Parks (which we support with some reservations about the personnel at DEEP that it will take to ensure they are used) and \$500,000 for urban forestry investments that we support. And the Passport to the Parks is left intact to support Park operations and maintenance.

There is also the proposed addition of 1 central District Operations Supervisor position for the State Parks. As you know, DEEP currently has Tammy Talbot in the West and John Guglielmoni in the East

overseeing and supporting the work of Park Supervisors and different park management units in various ways. This new position will have some park management units under it (though I think the specific units haven't been totally determined yet), and also will focus on moving the projects forward

that the State dedicated \$51.5 million in park infrastructure improvements to, as well as future infrastructure investments.

In CFPA's testimony to the Appropriations Committee on the budget proposal (attached) we support the elements of the Governor's Budget described above, but also **request an additional 15 Park Maintainers for DEEP to address their significant needs IN THE FIELD**. We justify our proposed increase based on the following criteria:

- No Park Management Unit should have only one maintainer (there are 7 that currently do); There are several Park Management Units that have two maintainers that should have more (e.g. Sherwood Island, Rocky Neck, Penwood, & Pachaug); and Hammonasset Beach State Park has 4 maintainers, but given the huge attendance there they should have more (in the past they have had as many as 11).

Lastly, please note pages 3-4 of CFPA's attached testimony. In it, I include statistics for each park management unit – how many acres, how many kinds of facilities, what the current staffing and seasonal levels are. When you look at the numbers at this level, DEEP's inadequate field staff numbers come into high focus.

I would encourage EAC members who want to help raise awareness on this lack of field staff to contact legislators working on the Conservation & Development Subcommittee (especially if they're yours) to let them know that DEEP desperately needs field staff to care for forests, parks, and wildlife management areas. If you want to share a [link to CFPA's testimony to Appropriations](#) in your outreach, here's the link.

The members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Conservation & Development can be found [here](#) (on page 3, Subcommittee #5- Conservation and Development). If EAC members have connections with House and/or Senate legislators on this important Subcommittee, please let me know.

New Business:

CT Horse Council Report:

Volunteer Horse Patrol:

The Volunteer Horse Patrol reports the hours for 2022 - 4,000 Hours with 1,808 patrols.

Total 20-year Patrol hours: 53,505 with 27,130 patrols

Total savings at \$25.00 is \$ 1,337,625.00

We will be celebrating our 20-year Anniversary at our annual meeting, March 18, 2023

EAC: Diane is now President of the CHC and her position as the 5th District representative needs to be filled. Denis Ciano will request to be appointed to the position. Recommendation letters from EAC and CHC will be written to go with her letter.

SCORP Update: The Advisory Committee will be releasing a public Survey.

Upcoming Events:

Friends of Machimoodus Spring Fling – Sunday March 19 12-3pm

National Trails Day Events are Saturday, June 3rd and Sunday, June 4th

The CT Greenways Council will have an Award Ceremony, Friday, June 2nd.

Old Business:

Larkin Bridle Trail: *From last meeting:* Discussion on getting a caution light at Rte. 67 crossing. Suggested to contact Naugatuck Valley COG: Aaron Budris & Richard Crowther
This has not been addressed yet.

Devil's Hop Yard State Park: CHC is working on getting better parking for horse trailers at the Mitchell Rd. area entrance.

EAC Website Update include new time and meeting dates for 2023 and meeting notes (March 24, 2022, June 2022 – meeting canceled), September 15, 2022 and December 15th 2022. We will also need a new picture up with Kim Bradley
<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Outdoor-Recreation/Equine-Advisory-Council>

Next Meeting: - Thursday, June 15th - at 6:00 pm

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm by Meg, 2nd Eric.