



## CONNECTICUT EQUINE ADVISORY COUNCIL

### MEETING REPORT for Thursday, September 15, 2022

**Call to Order:** The meeting called to order at 6:39 pm by Eric. This was a Zoom meeting.

**Attendance:** Eric Hammerling, Kim Bradley, Ruth Strontzer, Vevette Greenberg, Danielle Borelli

**Guests:**

**Excused:** Diane Ciano – sent in report

**Review Meeting Minutes:** The meeting minutes of March 24, 2022 were reviewed.

Motion to accept by Eric 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruth

\*Note that the June 2022 meeting was cancelled

**State Park & Forest Updates:**

**Larkin Bridle Trail:**

Diane sent in the following report for the meeting, an email from DEEP Supervisor Nathan Hale:  
On Jun 25, 2022, at 7:51 AM, Hale, Nathan <[Nathan.Hale@ct.gov](mailto:Nathan.Hale@ct.gov)> wrote:

So we worked as far as we could on the Rt 67 section heading towards Curt Smith, we stopped at the Culvert you refer to due to questions on how best to deal with the water, Work at that section is in the planning stages heading towards Curt Smith. We will check the areas that washed around the culvert this week. I did meet with DOT regarding a parking area at the RT 67 crossing (this area is entirely owned by DOT), there would need to be an electronic flashing signal that would be activated by a user, this has to be requested by the Town for some reason so that's been put on the back burner until that can be done. There are sightline concerns and they asked that 1 of the driveways be eliminated for safety. Again just had one meeting so far. The sketchy section coming up to Towantic has been repaired and is holding up well. There is a major washout near South Street that we are going to hopefully do in house this season its close to 1000 feet in length, that project request is making the rounds for signatures. The work by the Town on Hawley road is in the works as well and we The State are slated to get a few parking areas on each side of the road where the Larkin crosses, if I recall we asked for 2 to 4 on each side of the road with Crossing painted in the road, I recall Tammy and I discussing what we would ask for but am not positive if that included gates. Staffing shortages continues to be a problem statewide so we have not been out as frequently as we would like to be. Nate

Vevette Greenberg reported on the Larkin Bridle Trail that there is sinking around the culvert that was recently worked on by DEEP At the Rte. 67 crossing area.

## Trail Report – Ruth Strontzer

### Cockaponset SF

**Webber Woods** There is a Beaver dam started against the recently rebuilt bridge I put a red X at the location, on the white trail between the 2 yellow segments. The brook is totally dry below this dam to the pond. This issue was just found the last week of August during trail maintenance work by LCRVHC and the VHP. This is the bridge that they rebuilt for DEEP and Park Supervisor Alex Sokolow.

Saturday there will be a work detail going in to deal with some of the smaller trees that came down after this past big storm

**Northern Section – Haddam** the section located between Filley Rd, Jericho Rd and Beaver Meadow Rd and bounded by Rt 9 is a mess the Quinimay Trail, orange trail, orange red trail and the Blue Red trails have multiple areas of downed trees and wash outs to the point hikers are having issues getting through some areas on the orange trail never mind riders. This is the area I reached out to Alex about and offered to meet him and was shut down said he didn't have the man power or money to deal with the issues and couldn't send guys to just follow trails. I forwarded the email to Diane and his reply

**Machimoodus Sunrise SP** -- Bar way and tree down across trail both on Sunrise side blocking access to the Salmon River. No bi-pass to the bar way for foot or equine traffic when it was rebuilt and installed. The trail leading down from the top of that access road has a large tree and a washout. The Bar way to the Machimoodus side was rebuilt and equine and foot access closed off - DEEP has been contacted and Peter Wilson who is working under Park Supervisor Jack Hine met me out there and the bar way to Machimoodus has been repaired and reopened to foot and equine traffic. The sunrise side will be addressed in the next couple of weeks

Trails in Sunrise are in fairly good shape a past storm has caused some wash out of the old carriage road leading up from the river to the red and yellow trail. On the Sunrise side some old trails that we re-opened they are now mowing to keep open. The just this past week had to close the paved road leading to the boat launch area due to some major washing out of the road making it dangerous. An option to that might be to open the road leading through Sunrise and down to the river up to now is has been blocked to prevent traffic. It goes through the area that was under consideration before COVID to make a horse camping site there similar to Natchaug Sine there is a well near it as there is one near the open field that was also being considered for horse camping.

There is and very large tree across the blue trail near the launch area. You can get over it. There is also a tree that broke and splintered near the top of the red trail that goes from the road to the lower vista to the gravel road that leads to the upper vista. We cleared several trees from the Orange trail that loops behind the pond in Machimoodus as well and the from the path that encircles the other larger pond. The Old trail through the pine plantation has been reopened going from the yellow trail to the sand pit area. That area in April had a controlled burn. There is now a mowed path cleared of vines and brambles that goes along the tree line on the back side of the field.

Following a survey supported by a UCONN professor show massive support for a horse camp there and in Cockaponset. The Park Supervisor and the Eastern District Manager were both in support of the project and then Covid hit. Numerous time when riding there I get questioned if the plan will be moving forward.

**Mohawk SF** Trails are in pretty good shape.

Tornado Road Leading to the top had some small trees down that we were able to saw with our hand saws and clear away.

Bear Swamp Rd has a tree down just behind the bar way. We were able to trim enough branches off of it with hand saws that Riders and foot traffic can get over it further down 2 small trees were cleared off the road and pushed to the side.

Old Tourney Rd that goes from the tower to Wadhams Rd is barely passable with wash outs and a lot of exposed ledges.

Hubbell Rd the section going from Wadhams Rd to Mohawk Pond. Just a short distance in from Wadhams Rd there is a large tree broken off about 12' from the ground and it is still partially attached to the tree but hanging down across the trail. Riders and walkers are going under it but at any time it could finish breaking off and drop. This needs to be addressed by someone with a chain saw. Tracy Road has numerous trees down along its whole length. You can see where people have made paths around and in between the downed trees. We were able to clear a few but may be too large for a hand saw.

Vevette Greenburg reports that needs attention on Hubbell Rd. It is hanging over the trail.

**Barn Island WMA** - on the map top left side where a blue squiggle/circle mark is drawn in there is a very large tree down across the trail height is about 34-36 inches making very difficult for everyone to get over. This needs a chain saw to clear.

**Bluff Point SP** Trails are in great shape with some wash out areas on the trails. The one that goes from the Winthrop House foundation to the main road leading towards the beach is really washing out after some past storms. This particular trail is used by many people, bikers, hikers and riders since it is a short cut to get to the beach road from pretty much the center of the park.

**Wadsworth Falls SP** - Trails are in good shape. A lot of dead falls but they have been cleared of the trail. The drought has caused them to become very hard packed. The falls are still flowing but the water level is down.

The blue trail that starts at Laurel Grove Brook and the yellow trail junction and goes up hill to the red trail is washed out and very rocky. Walkers and hikers are finding the loose rocks an issue as are riders.

**Haddam Meadows SP** the trails around the perimeter is in good shape in 2 locations along the river the bank has collapsed into the river taking a portion of the trail so the trail has been moved over by heavy foot and equine traffic. There is a tree down on the back trail but we were able to saw off enough branches to make it passable. They are now mowing that trail and taking very good care of it so I expect that it will be removed shortly if it hasn't already been taken care of.

**Higganum WMA** As of Mid-June still has not been mowed despite them having said it is mowed annually. It has not been mowed for the past 5 years. Some of the issue being the road down to it had partially washed out but that was repaired almost 2 years ago and during that time vehicle track were seen in the meadow so it was still being used. Between the beavers taking over the southern end of the meadow and all the invasive plants and vines the meadow is being lost. This meadow has existed since colonial times and had been used to graze the communal town herd most of the road down the center is still usable only the southern end is too wet to use without sinking in the mud. A DEEP controlled burn maybe a solution to part of the problem. The far end of the meadow is still being used as a DEEP camping site for kayakers and canoeists.

**Lamentation Mountain SP** Trails some of which are more like old logging road are very washed out and getting worse. There are some very large trees down but people have cut bi-passes around them so you can get through. Lots of large rip rap type rock coming to the surface. There is a white trail that is beautiful and goes through pines and ferns. The brooks for the first time were completely dry when I was there. There is no parking for trailers we had to park at a private location and ride in.

**Valley Railroad SP** This runs alongside the Haddam Meadows. A short section from Haddam Station to Arnold Station is used by hikers and riders. It's in pretty good shape and is a fun little add on since there are trestle bridges both north and south of the Meadows that are out and no trains can cross. However, the track south of Arnold Station has a large amount of broken glass mixed in with the stone and on the sides along the way to the bridge.

**Airline Trail SP – Colchester** Is in good shape but E bikes are using it. People have no idea on it that dogs need to be leashed and others given the right of way.

**Salmon River State Forest** – there are a lot of washouts. One river crossing at the edge of the meadow is blocked by a huge dead tree that during past flooding in the spring was washed into the crossing area completely blocking it. The yellow diamond marked horse trail leading up from the Comstock Bridge has quite a bit of washouts scattered along it. However, it is still passable

**Devil's Hop Yard State Park** – Meg reports she is still waiting on a response from DEEPJack Hines regarding additional parking off Mitchell Road to get the horse trailers off the road.

### Legislation

#### **CT Horse Council – Volunteer Horse Patrol Report:**

Diane sent in the following report for the meeting:

The VHP Annual Meeting was held April 30<sup>th</sup>, hosted by the Reddington Rock Riding Club at their campground in Stafford, celebrating 19 Years of Service 2003-2021.

For 2021, we had a total of **2,409 Patrol Hours** with **1,322 patrols** out on our state parks, forests, town lands, land trusts and private lands. This represents saving the state (that's you and me!) **\$60,225.00** in service for 2021 alone !

In the 19 years since, the CH Volunteer Horse Patrol Program has provided **\$1,237,625.00** in volunteer service (*at \$25.00 hour*). This was accomplished through a total of 49,505 hours of patrols and trail maintenance throughout the state of CT in our state parks and forests, lad trusts, open spaces, town lands, city parks and private lands. Total Patrols: 25,322

**Legislation:** Eric reports that the governor approved

- 9 million for Recreation & Greenways
- 10 million for Open Space
- 15 million for state park infrastructure

### New Business:

#### **Trails Greenways Coordinator Update:**

Kimberly Bradley

CT State Parks Trails & Greenways Program

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

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Email: [kimberly.bradley@ct.gov](mailto:kimberly.bradley@ct.gov)

#### **Other DEEP Contacts:**

*Brian Wilson -Assistant Director [Brian.Wilson@ct.gov](mailto:Brian.Wilson@ct.gov) or 860-424-3229*

*Tom Tyler DEEP- State Parks Director*

*Mike Lambert - Chief of Outdoor Recreation*

**Greenways Council:** Diane sent in the following report for the meeting:

CHC is seeking an equestrian representative on the Council as Stacey Stearns would like to leave her appointment on the Council. She will stay on and help to look for her replacement.

Ruth Strontzer received a CT Greenways Council Award.

## **Greenways Council Holds 23rd Annual Greenway Awards and Kicks Off CT Trails Day Events**

### ***Four New Greenways Designated, Four Awards Given***

The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environment Protection and the Connecticut Greenways Council held their 22nd Annual Connecticut Greenway Awards and National Trails Day Celebration along the Poquonnock River Walkway in Groton, CT on Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The event is traditionally held on the Friday before CT Trails Day, which is the First Saturday in June.

New greenways in Manchester, Rocky Hill, Norfolk, and Groton were designated at the event, and awards were given out to four individuals who have made significant contributions to the promotion, development and enhancement of greenways in Connecticut.

#### **Newly designated greenways:**

**Cheney Rail Trail System:** This greenway is a key component of the town wide, interconnected network. It follows part of the corridor of the South Manchester Railroad, built by the Cheney brothers in 1869. The Manchester Land Conservation Trust (MLCT) owns about 1.7 linear miles of the original rail bed. Connections to the East Coast Greenway and the Hop River Trail make it easily accessible as well.

**Rocky Hill Greenway:** Totals 4 miles from Quarry Park to the Dividend Pond Trail. The Greenway itself extends from the north at Matterson Ave. about 3 miles to the Cromwell border. Visitors can visit parks and historic sites which the Greenway meanders through.

**Norfolk Mountain Express Accessible Rail Trail:** Once constructed, this trail will develop access for persons with disabilities and uses an existing railroad bed ROW. The Norfolk Rails to Trails Committee, Town of Norfolk and State of Connecticut have been working together over the past five years to develop a section of the abandoned CNE railroad bed now known as the North Brook Trail. This is the first of many sections linking North Canaan, Norfolk Center and eventually the town of Winchester.

**Groton Cross Town Greenway and Tri-Town Trail Greenway:** One is a section of the Tri-Town Trail and one for the Cross Town Greenway.

#### **This year's awardees:**

- **Lisa Watts:** Strategic communications professional with a track record of helping nonprofit organizations advance their missions. Served as the Content Manager for the East Coast Greenway Alliance for almost 4 years; wrote the ECGA's *Guide to the East Coast Greenway: New Haven, Connecticut, to Providence, Rhode Island, by Bike or on Foot*.
- **Mark Jewell** - Spent the last 22 years as a project manager advancing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure throughout New England and internationally. For the past 11 years has been working for CTDOT, as a member of the VHB team that assists CTDOT in managing all trail projects within the State's Transportation Alternatives program.
- **Laurie Giannotti (Lifetime Achievement Award)**– Recently retired from DEEP as head of the Trails & Greenways Program. Developed relationship between DEEP and CGC, facilitated the CT Recreational Trails grant program and worked to ensure the success of many trail projects. Went “above and beyond” to serve the committee and our outdoor spaces.

- **Ruth Strontzer:** Involved in 4-H for decades; treasurer with the Connecticut Trail Rides Association; member, Connecticut Horse Council and VHP, representative, CT Equine Advisory Council (2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District) and serves on the Board of The Friends of Machimoodus/Sunrise State Park. Ruth has helped organize club trail rides over the past 52 years showing others the wonderful state and private lands that are available in Connecticut to utilize on horseback.

**National Trails Day:**

Eric Reports: There were over 200 Events around the state with 4,00-5,000 people attending.

Diane sent in the following report:

There were two equestrian events for CT Trails Day:

**The Bridle Path Conservancy** replaced an old bridge in the Cockaponset State Forest (Weber Woods). The Westbrook Foundation provided the grant that paid for the materials for this and other bridges. A picnic lunch followed.

**Reddington Rock Riding Club** hosted a CT Trails Day Event – Blessing of the Mounts, Trail Ride & Chicken Barbeque.

**EAC Website Up Date:** Website needs to be updated. Last update was March 11<sup>th</sup> by Laurie Giannotti

**SCORP Update:** Eric reported that the SCORP is being updated

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> - 6:00 pm – CFPA

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 pm by Eric, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruth