



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

Meeting Minutes for September 13th, 2012

Attending:

Amy Stegall, Diane Ciano, Meg Sautter, Ruth Beardsley, Jan Collins, Laurie Giannotti, and Leslie Lewis.

Excused: Judy Beliveau.

Guests: Ginger Tullai (CHC), Fred Mastele (CHC)

Call To Order:

The meeting was held at the Northeast Utilities Building in Berlin. Meeting called to order at 6:26 PM by Amy.

Review Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes of June 14th, 2012 were reviewed accepted. Motion by Diane to accept as corrected, Meg 2nd, Motion carried.

Web Page for EAC Update:

Laurie will continue to update EAC's website as time regarding other additions previously mentioned.

STATE PARK & FOREST Updates:

Lost Silver Mine Horse Camp Update:

Diane reported she got 2 price quotes on the DEEP material list sheet for the Solar toilets from local businesses in the Eastford Area. Unfortunately, the building of the toilets will be in the Cockaponset Area, so she now needs to find other local building suppliers in that area. Laurie suggested contacting David Buckley and Shagbark Builders. Diane will contact them as well as Landon Lumber Co.

GOODWIN SF Update:

Laurie & Jan met with the Goodwin Trails Committee regarding the CHC mapping and marking of the 15 mile loop connecting Natchaug SF to Goodwin SF. The consensus was that CHC will mark the trail loop within the Natchaug SF and bring the yellow diamond trail to Goodwin. There are already marked trails in Goodwin that a rider can decide to take for additional mileage. There are several unmarked trails in Goodwin that can be marked with the yellow diamond markers to get riders onto these. Yellow markers can also be placed on the already marked trails as "confidence markers" for those following the 15 mile loop to the Goodwin Center.

Laurie brought maps of the approved 5, 10 & 15 mile trail loop. She reported that she & Jan attended the Goodwin Trails Committee meeting. There is a section of trail that is in question and will be reviewed further before it can be marked with the yellow diamonds. There was to be a site walk with DEEP Supervisor, Lori Lindquist with the Goodwin Trails Committee. Also, the Blue/White trail – will have a sign with as a statement that it is recommended for foot trails due to conditions (very rocky & muddy). This is not to say that bikes or horses could not use it, but to

give information on the condition of the trail before a horse or bike would decide to attempt using the trail.

Diane will contact Jean Morrison to start the marking of the 15 mile loop.

SHENIPSIT SF

Leslie reported that CFPA is working on a sign/kiosk for the forest.

LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION:

No discussion.

OLD BUSINESS:

TRAIL SURFACE STUDY:

Ruth reported that she met with members of the Lower Connecticut River Horsemen's Club (LCRVHC) and Bridle Path Conservancy regarding their work on trails. They have a power point presentation that shows their projects and how they were completed. Leslie offered to create a power point of Ruth's collection of information and documents of the study she conducted throughout the year.

NEW BUSINESS:

COLUMBIA PROPERTY - Morris

Meg reported on the condition of the trails. Western District Supervisor, Tammy Talbot was contacted, reporting that the culvert project is cleared to be constructed, and she would add the tree work to the schedule. The road is scheduled for brush hogging this fall. Additional info on the trail description is on the CHC Trails report attached.

QUILLIAN RESERVOIR-NAUGATUCK STATE FOREST – SEYMOUR

Meg submitted a thank you letter addressed to DEEP Supervisor, Joe Maler for EAC to review in support of both the Buswell and Clinton St. lots improvements to accommodate horse trailer parking. The letter also addresses possible expansion of the Buswell lot if in the future DEEP does acquire abutting land. The letter was approved to be sent and CC'd to additional DEEP personnel. The letter is attached for documentation to the EAC meeting notes. Additional info on the meeting with Joe and the description of the parking lots is on the CHC Trails report attached.

SALMON RIVER STATE FOREST

Diane reported that there was confusion regarding access to the Salmon River Forest and Comstock Bridge access that was rebuilt. CFPA has added a sign of "No Horses" in the kiosk and on the Salmon River Trail. This is the only access point into the forest that has been used by equestrians for years. There was question as to who approved the posting of "No Horses". Diane's detailed report is attached below. Ginger Tullai, CHC-VHP member, who rides this forest frequently, explained in detail the access and importance to keeping these trails open to

horses. Maps were reviewed. Laurie will set up a meeting at the Comstock Bridge with DEEP Officials and appropriate members of CFPA.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Thursday, December 13th

ADJOURNMENT:

7:35 PM. Motion by Diane, Ruth 2nd, and Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted:

Meg Sautter

Equine Advisory Council Member

Attached: CHC Trails Report from 9/13

Letter of Support for Quillian Reservoir Parking Lots

CHC Trails Report –Submitted by Diane Ciano & Meg Sautter

Salmon River State Forest – Comstock Bridge

This is a beautiful bridge that was reconstructed twice with DOT funding. Design of the bridge to deter motor vehicle/ATV traffic, and CFPA signs, close access to the forest for equestrian use. There is no legal access across the river except by the bridge that connects both sides of the forest trails. The Comstock Covered Bridge was seriously vandalized and burned several years ago. It has been rebuilt and was carefully recreated and looks really lovely as it is beautifully landscaped. It has narrow brick walkways leading to it, with info kiosks on either side. This is an extremely popular spot with fishermen where they stand shoulder to shoulder on opening day of trout season.





The Salmon River Trail and trails it connects to throughout the forest have been used by equestrians for years. These signs are now at the Rte 16 Comstock Covered bridge (which has been rebuilt and now CLOSED to horses). The main trail to Day Pond and throughout Salmon River Forest has been used by horses for centuries (hence the covered bridge). The only way across the river now, is to bootleg it - one side being state property and the other side privately owned.

The bridge itself is blocked with a slant type of entry on both ends allowing skinny wheelchair and foot traffic. However, the overhead bar, narrowness, and tight angle restricts horses from crossing the river by way of this historic covered bridge. This can easily be remedied by making the entrance way wider and removing the overhead bar way. Not sure why bikes are not allowed to cross the river by the bridge either. Travel by horseback on Rte 16, a very busy road, is not an option.



The Salmon River Trail is a wide old dirt road. Further down the trail past a bar way from the start point, CFPA markers are seen posting "NO BIKES" & "NO ATV'S" with nothing regarding horses. This is confusing when the beginning of the trail clearly shows CFPA markers saying "NO HORSES". If the Salmon River/ Day Pond trail is now closed to horses, as the pamphlet and signs in the kiosk from CFPA

say, then the forest and state park trails are closed to equestrian use according to the CFPA. The signs are intimidating and make one feel that they are trespassing on public lands governed by a private organization.

Question: When did CFPA “take over” this trail and close it to other user groups and what process did they go through with DEP to do this?

Granted there are many single track trails between the river and Day Pond, and there are a few that are not suitable for horses. There are several footbridges which are definitely for foot traffic only. There are numerous alternate crossing of streams are safe for horse and rider. There are other trails which have been used for years (and then discovered by the ATVs) that are challenging. There are some trails that have been eroded by the ATV wheels, but still very usable for trail riders. These trails have been "maintained" by individual riders throughout the years.

At some point the blue blazes veer off to the right but there are several unmarked trails that horseback riders use throughout the forest connecting to Day Pond State Park and Airline Greenway. The picture below shows an open telephone line through the forest that brings one to several trail systems on either side leading toward the Airline Greenway and Day Pond.



Other Trail Reports:

Columbia Property - DEEP Maintainer: Josh Rimany

Two members (Supervisors of the CT Horse Council – Volunteer Horse Patrol Diane & Meg) recently rode the Camp Columbia State Park trails and were very pleased on the nice grass trails that were perfect for horseback riding. We were also pleased to find a connecting trail off the DEEP Red Trail which was blazed white that brought us into a section of the White Memorial Wildlife Refuge that ended on Rte 109 by East Shore Rd., which helps extend the riding trail system. We noted two problems that were reported to Tammy Talbot:

Most of the Red trail is cleared and great riding with grass or gravel trails. There is a large section of the trail that needs attention - brush hogging where it has become overgrown and there were several large downed trees that need to be cut to clear the trails, as we had to go off trail to get around them. Both of us worked over an hour clearing the trail and cutting overgrown branches, but it does need more extensive clearing as mentioned.

The most important issue that we feel needs to be addressed for safety and environmental reasons is at the head of the trail where you have to cross a small stream bed that is very mucky and has damage from erosion, making it difficult and somewhat dangerous to cross safely. A bridge would be ideal to place here and would avoid any future injuries and protect the streambed from any further damage. The bridge would not require anything extensive or expensive as the stream is approximately only 3' wide. I would be happy to discuss this further with you to see if DEEP would provide this for the visitors of the park, including local horse people who may want to enjoy the trail system.

Tammy responded that a culvert project that the DEEP has been working on for the last 5 years is now cleared to be constructed and she would add the tree work to the schedule and that the road is scheduled for brush hogging this fall. A Big Thank you to Tammy and DEEP.

Quillian Reservoir (Naugatuck SF)

On 8-20-12 CHC-VHP Supervisors Diane Ciano and Meg Sautter met with Joe Maler, the DEEP Supervisor, at the Quillian Reservoir in Ansonia. We had requested the meeting due to the recent work done on the parking lot on Rte 313 by Clinton St. In years past, there had been discussion of a parking lot that would accommodate horse trailers. Upon seeing the work being done on this lot, we contacted Joe Maler. Diane and I met Joe in the Buswell Street parking lot. This is a relatively small lot making trailer turning difficult. Buswell is a dead end, narrow street, ending in this parking lot. If there are any vehicles in the lot, no more than one horse trailer can be parked here. The street itself is totally residential. Although very quiet, is too narrow to park a horse trailer on. Mr. Maler informed us that a private land owner, adjacent to this lot, is looking for a swap with the State. The land owner is asking for egress onto

Buswell St. and would give the State a fenced in parking lot adjacent to the present Buswell lot. With the addition of the fenced in lot, trailer parking would be easily possible as the addition would more than double the size of the present lot. We are whole heartily in favor of the swap.

We then drove to the Clinton Street parking lot. Unfortunately this lot too, is small. With the removal of 3 trees and leveling of the base, trailer parking would be possible. Across the street from this lot is a logging operation on State land. The area here is nice and the trails from the logging operation are good. With better parking in the Clinton St. lot, access to this section of forest would be easily available. We did discuss the several 'side of the road' pull offs. Unfortunately these areas are barely large enough to accommodate the trucks and trailer. However, once parked, there is no room to safely unload a horse for grooming and tacking. All the 'pull offs' are located on Clinton Street and Rte 313, both VERY busy streets. Diane and I both felt this was too dangerous a situation for horse folks to utilize. Lastly we visited the newest lot, on Rte 313. This lot had been recently graded and expanded with a donation of money and sweat equity from a local bicycle company. This lot is in the shape of a dog leg and is unsuitable for a horse trailer due to the angles of the lot and the fact that Rte 313 is so busy with traffic.

Joe Maler was very open to our suggestions concerning the Buswell and Clinton St. parking lots. He encouraged us to write a letter in support of both these lots. He suggested that we list our requests for each lot also. A letter in support of both the Buswell and Clinton St. lots is attached for review by the EAC Council. We would like to know to whom this letter should be sent to regarding expansion of the Clinton Street lot and possible expansion of the Buswell lot if in the future DEEP does a land swap with the private land owner.



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

September 14, 2012

Joe Maler
DEEP Supervisor

RE: Parking lots for Quillian Reservoir located on Buswell Street and Clinton Street

Mr. Maler,

I'm writing this letter as a follow up to our meeting on August 8, 2012 at the Buswell St. parking area for Quillian Reservoir. You met with me and Diane Ciano, both CHC-VHP Supervisors.

Diane and I are very enthusiastic about the possible expansion of the Buswell St. parking lot. You had mentioned a private landowner that was interested in an exchange with the State. He was looking for egress onto Buswell Street and was offering a fenced in parking lot adjacent to the existing lot. That would more than double the size of the existing lot. With this swap, trailer parking would no longer be an issue. As it stands now, the existing lot empty can accommodate two horse trailers. If there are any vehicles in the existing lot, one horse trailer cannot turn around in the lot.

The second lot we discussed and visited is located on Clinton Street. We discussed the possible removal of 3 trees in this lot; one is dead and may pose a hazard. With the removal of the 3 trees and some grading of the base, horse trailer parking could easily be accomplished. Parking in this area would allow horses to access the State land across Clinton St. where there has been a logging operation.

I again want to thank you for your time in addressing our concerns. We appreciate your listening to our requests and discussing viable options for trailer parking. It was a pleasure to meet you and we hope that should you need the services of the Connecticut Horse Council Volunteer Horse Patrol you won't hesitate to contact us. As stated at the meeting, we would be happy to help with the clearing of the 'exchange' lot on Buswell St. if this possibility presents itself in the future.

Sincerely,
Meg Sautter
CHC-VHP Supervisor
megsautter@att.net
860.666.6938

Cc: Laurie Giannotti, Tammy Talbot, John Cimoichowski, Tom Tyler