

NEW YORK STATE TRAILS COUNCIL MEETING
Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center
195 New Karner Road, Albany, NY 12205
Saturday, September 21, 2013
10:30 am – 3:00 pm

MINUTES

Call to Order

Introductions and new delegate

All were introduced and a new delegate representing snowshoeing was proposed.

Peter Fedorick is a long time resident of Saratoga County and a retired municipal auditor for the Office of the State Comptroller. Much of his work has been done in the North Country. He has a passion for the outdoors and mountain climbing, paddling and pedaling, hiking and snowshoeing. Currently, Peter is busy working with Saratoga PLAN, a local land trust, at their Henning and Le Vine Preserves, constructing and maintaining a network of trails. Peter’s appointment to the Committee was unanimous.

Those present were:

<p>4- Wheel Drive – All-Terrain vehicles – Equestrian – Carol Schmelz, Mark Wehnau and Sharon Young Slate Hiking- Jane Daniels, Dick Hubbard, Wes Lampman Nordic Skiing – Off-Highway Motorcycles - Off road Bicycling – Craig Fury On Road Bicycling – Ivan Vamos, Samantha Langton Snowmobiles – Robert Bryant Snowshoeing – Katie Henrikson, Peter Fedorick (new delegate) Water Trails- Tom Casey and Mike Prescott</p>	<p>FHWA – National Park Service – Karl Beard HRV Greenway – Canal Corp. – NYSDEC – S. McCrea Burnham NYSOPRHP – Nancy Stoner, Greg Smith (presenter) NYSDOH – Elaine Troy PTNY – Drew Pollak-Bruce</p>
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Larry Paul – A delegate spoke in remembrance of Larry Paul as an outstanding advocate.

Correction/Approval of Minutes – March 23, 2013 Minutes of the meeting were corrected as follows:

Page 4 - the words “Crystal Hill section” was changed to “Crystal Hill Trail”

“DEC” was changed to “NYC DEP” and added “in the Catskills”

Page 6 – line 2, the date was changed to May 2013

A motion (Dick Hubbard) was entertained to accept the minutes as corrected, seconded by Ivan Vamos. The minutes were accepted as corrected.

Note: Action Items are added at the end

Presentation

Greg Smith, from the Interpretive Unit of the State Historic Preservation Office at Peebles Island gave a presentation entitled, “*The When, Where, and How of Interpretive Signs... (and a few things definitely not to do)*”

The presentation was well received. The Powerpoint is being requested to be shared.

Covered items included:

Why interpretive signs are important – for pointing out the history of the area e.g. the towpath of the Erie Canal.

Recommendations - Pictures are better than words... use as few words as possible

Signs offer opportunities to interpret – History, Habitats, Animals, Beach grass, Health and safety, Geology
Lake effect weather, Traditions such as shore dinners in the Thousand Islands (salad dressing)

Interpretive signs offer “way finding” and orientation; Trail network and maps signs

A suggestion was made that way finding signs include GIS information or QR codes for cell phones.

Council provided feedback on Minnewaska trailhead signs: consider use of black diamond (can be trail blaze but also denotes Difficulty level of trail); appreciate the elevation profile; include a destination; elevation information is duplicated in the text and on the profile; consider adding GPS coordinates.

For signs about danger... be specific... say what the danger is!

Make signs big and vertical to call attention to the information at trailhead and entrance areas.

Interpretive signs can be on a steel frame and at 45 degrees for reading ease.

Materials to be used include: Paper covered in Plexiglas/metal (does not hold up well); Wood; Fiberglass; Porcelain (nice but expensive); Phenolic resin (some concerns about this); Vinyl or fabric banners; Adhesive vinyl wrap have surfaced recently – holds up well, can be peeled on and off and can be applied over aluminum.

There are many outlets for purchase locally.

Think about what changes may be made to the trail before you spend money for signs

Place signs facing where they will not get much direct sun.

Design of signs is the lion's share of the cost.

Process to follow is -

- Research

- Writing

- Image search and permissions (you do need to get permission to use images and graphics)

- Editing

- Preliminary graphic design

- Final graphic design

- Fabrication and installation

DO NOT Put too much text...

Questions were answered about what a volunteer group should do when there is no staff and no money.

Suggestions and **drawbacks**:

Brochures that delineate a self-guided tour – brochures tend to get dumped along the trail and need to be replenished... rather... put the money into a mobile website and a cell phone app. Use QR codes

Or do a podcast of what you want to share, put it on a website for people to download to their iPod, then they can play it while they are on site.

For Podcasts.... keep them under 3 minutes.

Consider working with Towns and Counties for directional signage along roadways, marketing to tourists, directing to trail resources.

Karl Beard recommended: "Signs, Trails, and Wayside Exhibits: Connecting People to Places," 3rd Edition, by Michael Gross, Ron Zimmerman, and Jim Buchholz. ISBN-13: 978-0932310477

Contact information for Greg is: gregory.smith@parks.ny.gov

Implementation of Statewide Trails Plan – Information Exchange

1. Volunteer Recognition – *Based on discussion last time, can we implement a state or county wide recognition program?*

We referred to the table that was sent to all delegates... any additions can be communicated to Jane Daniels and Nancy Stoner. Nancy suggested that more information could be added about the chart. Individuals can use the suggestions and chart within their own agencies. In the chart, Under Public official, we can solicit recognition letters both for Officials and from Officials.

Can this Council implement some sort of statewide recognition program?

Questions raised during discussion were:

What is involved?

What would be the selection process?

Would there be categories for awards – personal, organizational, other?

What would be the nomination process and review of nominations – reference was made to the PTNY process.

Consider media options. Sponsors?

Would this be an in-house process (in the trails committee) to recognize anyone?

What would be the award?

WHAT IS THE GOAL of an awards program? Why do we want to do this?

Answer was: To publicize all the work being done to improve trails

Once you start it, it has to continue

What should we recognize? Not volunteer hours...already promoted.

Mike Prescott – suggested that each group represented here do some work in gathering information about other groups working in their same area – and send the information to Samantha.

Mike also said that we need to start representing more groups – and that we should begin to promote ourselves more – as a committee.

Karl suggested that we can, and other committees might not be able to, recognize the groups within the trails committee for work done.

Samantha Langton volunteered to collect information from delegates about working groups in their areas for being awarded.

Question: Is it worthwhile? Is a Statewide recognition of value...?

Some members feel that this organization should not be in the awards business.

Too time consuming and not really part of the objectives of the Trails Council.

Decision made by the group:

Volunteer recognition is very important

Delegates - Distribute the chart to all your local groups and see how they feel about recognition. Add a little local story about how someone was recognized... Ask of these groups if they feel that recognition from Statewide Trails Council would be of value.

Jane will revise the chart... Nancy will distribute the chart again and then we'll see what feedback is provided to the committee.

A Motion was made by Carol (seconded by Sharon) - Jane Daniels is directed to draft a recognition letter now – to the Counties that have a Countywide Trails Plan or Greenway plan or other formal recreation plan - from NY State Trails Council. Counties suggested were Ulster, Rockland, Chautauqua, and Allegany. Nancy will double check resource list and confirm appropriate counties.

It was suggested that the Committee could work on a template for Trails Plan legislation and Open spaces.

Future work on the subject of recognition should be conducted by e-mail. Anyone interested in forming a subcommittee for this subject, please let Jane Daniels know.

2. Training – Statewide Trails Webinars

Sub-Committee met earlier this year and developed a theme, but there has been no further advancement on this project. OPRHP has added Trails Training to the Technical Assistance Tab on the website and currently links to The National Trails Training Partnership on the American Trails Website:

<http://nysparks.com/recreation/trails/technical-assistance.aspx>

3. Trails Planning Resource list development - An intern worked on this in the Spring. Nancy is currently reviewing the list and will send out to the Council for review.

4. State Trails Inventory...as an update to last March's minutes – the comprehensive database is not feasible, however, a web search of state and federal agencies, counties and regional entities with trail maps and/or trail lists and information has been compiled and the list may be added to the website as a resource. The list was distributed by email previous to meeting for feedback; public agencies, statewide orgs, MPOs, regional tourism, down to county level. Please review and provide any omissions. The list will eventually be posted on OPRHP Trails website.

5. Updating the Statewide Trails Plan document – Timeline – 2010 plan is being looked at as a 5 year document... updating in 2015, with surveys beginning in 2014... Start looking at planning process (full plan, amendment, update), inventory, surveys. Nancy asks for feedback on what might be missing or what needs to be expanded. The Statewide Trails Plan is located on the web at:

<http://nysparks.com/recreation/trails/statewide-plans.aspx>. Please take a look.

Question – how do we know what may have been completed? What implementation plans have been cut, if any? Look at the plan with a statewide focus. Nancy will follow up on the potential for a status/completion/updates table for implementation steps.

Lunch Break (Subs were provided – dishes to share were plentiful – networking happened)

Delegate Reports and Concerns

Jane Daniels - An idea to help lost hikers - two trails stewards were hired to be a presence on Breakneck Ridge during busy season – successes were experienced in avoidance of accidents.
Jane held a show up when you can workday, and built 384 feet of puncheon.
Jane announced that “Lark in the Park” is scheduled for Oct 5-14, 2013

Equestrians – Carol received an e-mail with two concerns which she brought to the Committee.
Youth hunting, the first weekend in October, raises safety concerns for park users who may worry about young hunters with shot guns. (Darien Lake State Park and Allegany State Park)
Also, mountain bikes are being seen in Carleton Hill, Darien Lake and Knox Farm, where they have not been seen before. Are they allowed now? Those observed have been travelling fast, often have on ear buds and are unaware of others in the area.

The National Guard has been working at Bond Lake Park (county) to widen and improve ditching on the existing cross country skiing and hiking trails. This was part of their training for flood remediation.

The NiCo Escarpment Legacy Project findings will be presented on Wed. Sept. 25. Carol submitted a 50 year old, 15 mile equestrian and hiking trail, on the escarpment, to be included in the cultural and historic information. The goal is to re-create access to this trail for this generation.

Otter Creek - A concern was raised about the large number of Canadians using Otter Creek on Holiday weekends. It is felt that they should be charged a daily fee for camping. NY campers who go to Canada are charged camping fees and count on Otter Creek for a free experience. Perhaps charging fees to Canadians would help with overcrowding.

High Banks Trail sections at Otter Creek are in need of remediation.

DEC could expand their mapping to include horse trails on maps – so equestrians can find places to ride.

Challenge to NYSDEC and OPRHP to better promote locations and availability of equestrian trails around the state.

Dix Bridge planking has been delivered

Dick Hubbard from Finger Lakes Trail–
A work project moved 9 miles off road and into park land. In Danby, a shed was built. New lean-tos are being built. Many new trails are being constructed and/or re-routed. Dick discussed the benefits of partnering with many different organizations (such as ADK) and others. His group has adopted the Volunteer Stewardship (DEC) plans into their volunteer agreements. They work with private landowners and DEC to address some multi-use trail concerns.

Crystal Hills Trail is now complete.

North Country National Scenic Trail is complete through parts of NY to the Blue Line and will eventually connect to Long Trail, VT. Has been hiked by two people. One hiker is starting from North Dakota. McCrea took Dick up on his invitation to Hike...

Request that ACTION ITEMS be added at the end or beginning of minutes.

Wes from ADK-

A project in the summer for 12 weeks rerouted the southern area of the Northville Placid trail; Silver Lake to Shaker Mountain. There are 14 miles of new trail, rerouting off Rt. 9. The new section will open officially in Northville next June on National Trails Day. In 2014 – January 11, 2014 - National Winter Trails Day will be held with events hosted in several locations. A group of volunteers work in Region 4 and 5 to rescue lean-to's.

Tom Casey –

There were no reported concerns from his constituency. Paddling is pretty good in spite of Hurricane Sandy damage. Carmans River – Pine Barrens – A day in the life of the Carmans – 15 student groups doing scientific studies for one day. Still working on trails along the river and restoration of a fire tower to the Pine Barrens – Larry Paul (a former advocate who passed away) was working on this and now Tom Casey is taking it over. Tom asks for help with negotiating liability issues being brought up by legal beagles. George Profous was mentioned as a contact in DEC Region 3.

Mike Prescott – As Water Trails rep., he will be investigating making contact with other water trails people and try more networking. He asks for information from all of us as he expands his contact list. mpresco1@nycap.rr.com is the best way to contact him.

No Snowshoe report

Ivan Vamos – On-road Bicycling –

DOT is holding an information session on the Remsen Lake Placid rail line. Input is requested before Sept. 25 nysttravelcorridor@dot.ny.gov

Ivan recommends making comments.... Ivan will send out a specific e-mail to give us as an action item **** (After the meeting there were several e-mails exchanged between Ivan Vamos and Dominic Jacangelo and the entire committee. The e-mails are not included in the minutes)

Item 2 for the future – bikes on Amtrak is being worked on. A test run happened in July and a new club car was outfitted for four bikes. Several groups of riders tested it out.

Ivan laments that DOT has made a formal decision to do “preservation first” roadwork – which does not allow for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation. He is also worried about a trend towards very poor pavement corrections, especially for road shoulders.

Craig Fury – Fats in the Cats – off road on rail trails; there is lots of activity. A Kingston to Catskills rail trail (passing the Ashokan Reservoir) has been proposed. Craig is working with DEC and the Open Space Institute to attach a piece of land to the Bluestone Wild Forest in order to go build the trail. Permission has not yet been granted.

Samantha – On-road Bicycling - About the Thatcher State Park collaboration – A bike skills park will be added and mountain bike single track trails. Daniels Road land in Saratoga should close soon.

Elections

Chair and Vice Chair - Nominations were solicited from the floor... Jane Daniels for Chair and Ivan Vamos for Vice-Chair. Since our By-laws require pre-publication of nominations, the official election will be held in March 2014. Nancy will send out notice at least 45 days prior to next meeting.

A suggestion was made to amend the By- laws – A committee was formed: Jane Daniels, Katie Henrikson, and Tom Casey will serve. They will bring suggestions to the March 2014 meeting, specifically on the subject of extending the terms of officers to be more than one year, since we only meet two times yearly.

Agency Reports

OPRHP - Nancy Stoner

Recreational Trails Program/CFA update –

CFA closed August 12. Received 81 RTP applications, over \$10 million in requested funding. Approx. \$2.7 million available. Currently in review process. No official timetable for award announcements. Previous years during month of December.

Follow up to inquiry at last meeting, the value for volunteer time for unskilled labor has been increased to the New York State amount that is listed on IndependentSector.org. Found that other grant programs were using this reference especially for RTP in other states, including Federal government. So as of 2013 grant round, for OPRHP EPF and RTP, grantees can document up to \$28.73 per hour for volunteer labor (18 and over).

This is not retroactive to previous grants.

Professional services are still counted at the professional's rate if that is the service being provided.

Master Plans update - refer to the chart on the back of the Agenda as mailed

SCORP update – expect to be published by end of the year.

The Commissioner of OPRHP is very tuned into trails. Nancy reported that many trail projects are in the budget.

OPRHP has partnered with New York-New Jersey Trail Conference to implement a Backcountry Trails Program in the Palisades Region. It is currently active at Sterling Forest State Park and is increasing trail stewardship and training volunteers while implementing the Trails Plan.

A request for information on horse trails in Moreau State Park. This has been addressed.

DEC – S. McCrea Burnham

The Volunteer Stewardship Agreement Policy is complete. Please go on line and take a look at it. Full volunteer coverage is available under the program. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/90822.html>

Open Space Plan – was due last week, but is not yet complete. The new target date is mid October.

Remsen - Lake Placid Travel Corridor was discussed in the group and follow up e-mails were exchanged after the meeting.

Questions were asked and answered about Finch Pruyn land and classification. Easements are purchased, but designation still needs input. Equestrians have an interest in using this land. The towns of North Hudson, Minerva and Newcomb all got land from Finch Pruyn. Many new campgrounds will be on the locally owned lands... not on State land.

Other

FHWA- no report

National Parks Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program - Karl Beard

At the national level:

- The NPS design guide handbook for canoe & kayak launches is being revamped by NPS-RTCA in partnership with River Network. The first product planned for release will be an interactive website. A hardcopy book and downloadable pdf are also planned to follow, as funding permits. The new design guide will be entitled Prepare to Launch. The current (2004) version, entitled Logical Lasting Launches, is still available at: www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/helpfultools/launchguide/title.pdf

- The National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program website has been revamped. It has some new multimedia features, and is more fully integrated into the larger NPS online environment, but it is not yet repopulated with the online publications and other resources that were previously popular. To visit the new site, subscribe to the Rivers & Trails e-newsletter, find Facebook links, etc. visit: www.nps.gov/rtca.

- The National Water Trail (NWT) website is up and running. This is a new category of designation within the National Recreation Trail (NRT) system; it was established in 2012 by the US Dept. of Interior. Eleven NWTs have been designated so far, and NY has 2 of them: the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail, and the Bronx River. The website explains and promotes the NWT system, and also provides a toolbox - notably a great primer for how to develop trail maps using Google Earth: www.nps.gov/watertrails

Planning for park units:

- The Trails Master Plan for the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS in Hyde Park is complete. For the first time, it enables mountain bicycle trail use within key portions of the park. A bicycle through-route is also planned, which will link 3 sites and also link southward from the Home of FDR to the adjacent Culinary Institute of America. A landing site for the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail (the park's first such site) is also enabled at Bard Rock; this site is planned to be designated sometime this fall. The complete plan is available for download [here](#)

RTCA community assistance projects:

RTCA assistance was impeded by the federal sequester in 2012-13, since one major effect was to restrict travel. Although additional cutbacks are anticipated in 2013-14, RTCA will strive to provide continued assistance to communities. Some highlights include:

- Finger Lakes & Erie Canalway water trails. The "Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail plan" is in late draft form <http://cayugablueway.weebly.com/>. A new water trail planning effort is getting underway on Canandaigua Lake, and there is scattered interest on Seneca Lake and the Cayuga-Seneca Canal.
- Kingston Trails - A 1.5-mi urban rail trail that could connect with the Wallkill Valley RT (including the new Rosendale trestle), the O&W RT, the Rondout Creek promenade, a system of urban complete streets, and Ulster County's proposed Catskill Mtn RT. www.facebook.com/KingstonRailTrails
- Harlem River Greenway - <http://harlemriverworkinggroup.org/greenway/our-vision/>
- Groups interested in seeking RTCA assistance can learn more at: www.nps.gov/rca, or by contacting Karl Beard.

Canal Corporation- no report

Hudson River Valley Greenway –

Hudson River Ramble is this weekend. Through Empire State development, there is a \$90,000 grant available. \$50,000 in trail grants will be announced.

Parks and Trails NY – Drew reports that "Growing the Grassroots" applications are open through November. Trails groups can get up to \$3,000 for "growing" their local organizations. PTNY will hold a call in mid October on how to apply. Go to PTNY website for information. www.PTNY.org

A "Bicycling Brings Business" information session/meeting will be held Oct. 9 and 10 in Oneida. Information will be provided during one evening and then a bike day will be held on Saturday... FREE

The NYS Complete Streets Law passed in 2011 – but NYSDOT's "preservation first" policy may be in contrast to the principles of the Law. NYS DOT is holding meetings in regions across the state...this is a good beginning. Meetings are not open to the public, but the public is encouraged to submit comments. See <https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/completestreets/nysdot> for more information.

New Yorkers for Alternative Transportation (NY4AT) is working to get funding for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation into the State budget.

Old Business – Do we want to have a speaker next time?

TOPIC suggested – Marketing trails and social media marketing information. The suggested presentation time is no more than 1 hour (½ hour presentation; ½ hour Q&A).

Items to be covered could include –

What is the most effective marketing to reach clientele that uses trails, horses, kayaks, etc.?

Consider traditional means as well as new technologies.

Cost effectiveness, funding sources?

We are reminded that college students can sometimes be used to help with marketing projects.

Jane will look for a person who can speak on this topic.

Next meeting dates: Saturdays, March 22 and September 20th, 2014.

Location: Saratoga Spa State Park – Administration Building

Adjourned at 3:09 pm.

Thinking ahead about

I Love My Park Day, Saturday May 3, 2014

National Trails Day, Saturday June 7, 2014

Hudson River Valley Ramble, Weekends in September, TBA

(Action items below)

ACTION ITEMS

Recognition Table:

- Delegates will share the chart with their local groups and see how they feel about recognition and how the chart may be used in a more local and regional sense. Add a little local story about how someone was recognized.... Ask for feedback about the table and its use. Ask of these groups if they feel that recognition from Statewide Trails Council would be of value.

Recognition Letter to Counties:

- Jane will draft a recognition letter addressed to Counties that have a Countywide Trails Plan or Greenway plan or other formal recreation plan (adopted); letter from the Council.
- Nancy will confirm list of counties (Counties suggested were Ulster, Rockland, Chautauqua, and Allegany.)
- Letter will be reviewed by Council either prior to or at March 2014 meeting.

Recognition Sub-Committee:

- Future work on the subject of recognition should be conducted by e-mail. Anyone interested in forming a subcommittee for this subject, please let Jane Daniels know.
Sub-committee could consider work on a template for Trails Plan legislation and Open spaces.

Trails Plan Resources and Trails Inventory Lists:

- Nancy will be emailing out under separate cover both lists for delegates to review. Please provide feedback.

Statewide Trails Plan (5 year update 2015):

- Delegates asked to review the 2010 New York Statewide Trails Plan on the website and provide feedback to Nancy on what is missing and what needs to be expanded upon.
<http://nysparks.com/recreation/trails/statewide-plans.aspx>

Water Trails:

- Contact Mike Prescott with names and resources for local water trails: mpresco1@nycap.rr.com

By-Laws:

- Jane Daniels, Katie Henrikson, and Tom Casey will meet about changing the terms of office in the By-Laws.

Presentation:

- Jane Daniels to seek presenter for next meeting.

Travel Vouchers can be mailed to:

Kathy Nahm

Planning Bureau

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation

Albany, NY 12238

If you need the forms or have any questions about filling them out, please contact Kathy at 518-486-2909.