

NEW YORK STATE TRAILS COUNCIL MEETING
Five Rivers Environmental Education Center
Delmar, NY
April 14, 2018 10:30 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order

Announcements:

New Agency Representatives:

Sasha Eisenstein, NYS Canal Corporation
Nicole Unser, OPRHP Director of Snowmobiling

Departures:

Jane Daniels, Hiking
Mark Wehnau, Equestrian
Craig Fury, Off-road Cycling

Additions:

Samantha Langton, Off-Road Cycling
Paul Winkeller, On-road Cycling
Jim Romeo, Motorized Trail Bikes
Bill Lasher, Equestrian
Josh Wilson, Nordic Skiing

Council Attendance:

4-Wheel Drive – Todd Syska
All-Terrain Vehicles – Jeff Binga
Equestrian – Dan Gruen, Bill Lasher, Carol Schmelz
Hiking – Quinn Wright
Nordic Skiing – Josh Wilson
Off-Highway Motorcycles – Jim Romeo
Off-road Bicycling – Samantha Langton, Michael Vitti
On-road Bicycling – Ivan Vamos
Running – Jerry Smith
Snowmobiles – Dominic Jacangelo, Anne O’Dell
Snowshoeing – Peter Fedorick

Universal Access – Denis Livsey
Water Trails – Tom Casey
FHWA -
National Park Service – Karl Beard
HRV Greenway – Elizabeth Campochiaro
Canal Corporation –
NY-NJ Trail Conference – Alex Bradley
NYSDEC –
NYSOPRHP – Chris Morris
NYSOPRHP – Nicole Unser
NYSOPRHP – Thomas Hotaling

NYS DOT –

PTNY –
ECNHC – Brian Yates

Others in Attendance: Curt Austin

Correction/Approval of Minutes of October 14, 2017 Meeting

Motion to approve minutes: Ivan Vamos Second: Dan Gruen
Motion passed unanimously.

Presentations:

Overview of the Recreational Trail Program in New York State, Thomas Hotaling, RTP Grant Program Assistant, NYS OPRHP

NYS receives \$2 million a year for its Recreational Trails Program. Funds are distributed to agencies and trails groups in alternate years and pay for up to 80% of costs. Minimum award is \$25K, maximum \$200K. User groups must have an ownership interest on a management agreement with agencies. Tom reviewed eligibility requirements. Projects must have Federal authorization before construction begins, and there can be long lead times for design approval. Tom said he is working to minimize

NYSDOT involvement in order to speed up the process. Groups may register and pre-qualify at www.grantsreform.ny.gov.

Last year RTP funded seven equipment project and several related to the Empire State Trail. A complete list is posted on the governor's website. Americantrails.org has a nationwide list.

Jerry Smith commented that budgets for trail projects are out of control and at the mercy of politicians, not users. Ivan Vamos cited types of projects that involve high expense. Dominic Jacangelo noted that the Buy America program slows acquisition of equipment. He said costs also rise because there is greater call for trails for a wider variety of users. Anne O'Dell said we should make an effort to address various concerns in the next Statewide Trails Plan. Todd Syska commented on the difficulty in getting permission from NYS for motorized trails. Jim Romeo, Anne O'Dell and Jeff Binga added other comments in support of public trails for motorized uses. Dominic Jacangelo pointed out that RTP funds can be used for such trails on private land. Curt Austin offered an opposing view, and a debate ensued, to be continued at another time. Jerry Smith proposed a Trails Council subcommittee to deal with the issue.

Introduction to the Upper Hudson Rail Trail: Curt Austin, Friends of the Upper Hudson Rail Trail <http://www.upperhudson.org>.

Curt described a proposed trail from Saratoga to Tahawus, including parts on an old mining railroad right-of-way. The railroad operator, Iowa Pacific, barred use of 88 miles of the route by snowmobiles, which formerly used it. Iowa Pacific may abandon the line. One scenario involves the state and Warren County applying to the Surface Transportation Board for abandonment of the line and state purchase of it. "Rail banking" might come into play. Curt also showed a concept for a 157-mile trail from Saratoga to Lake Placid. Dan Gruen asked what uses would be allowed on the trail, and another discussion of multi-use ensued.

Elections: Chair: Quinn Wright nominated Carol Schmelz and Jerry Smith seconded.
Vice Chair: Jeff Binga nominated Samantha Langton and Anne O'Dell seconded.
Secretary Tom Casey cast a vote for reelection of both.

Lunch Break

Delegate Reports:

Samantha Langton said mountain bikers are working on plans for new trails at Minnewaska State Park and Jockey Hill, aka Bluestone Wild Forest.

Mike Vitti gave an update on Sterling Forest multi-use trails. Mike asked why the state couldn't use machines instead of hand labor. Chris Morris cited Americorps rules. He also mentioned the start of tick season on Long Island. He is experimenting with using blowers to remove leaf litter as a means of diminishing ticks. He recommended Permethrin-treated clothing. Tom Casey mentioned a relatively new phenomenon where victims of tick bites become allergic to red meat.

Jerry Smith noted that demand for trails is on the rise nationwide and some New York communities are seeing a decline in golfing and the sale and re-use of their properties.

Quinn Wright mentioned progress on the North County Trail. Ivan Vamos mentioned the new Crown Point Bridge on the trail route is safe for bikes and pedestrians, unlike the old one.

Ivan Vamos discussed a study of usage of alternate means of transportation. It could have an effect on recommendation for the Statewide Trails Plan.

Curt Austin mentioned that Warren County has a program of improving roads for bike safety.

Dennis Livsey is looking for people to help with planning access to Boreas Pond.

Dominic Jacangelo said snowmobile registrations are up considerably. Snowmobilers have been active in the planning for Boreas Pond. He fears the lot at the end of the road will become overwhelmed with usage. He said the state should “do better than what is required.” He discussed the Adirondack Railroad: the Adirondack Park Agency is working on a change of definition of a trail corridor where the rails will be pulled up. He also discussed raising fines for unregistered snowmobiles and operating them without mufflers.

Motion by Dominic Jacangelo that the Trails Council write in support of the APA making the definition of a trail corridor include trail usage on a railroad corridor, whether it has rails or not (Alternative 6). Second: Dan Gruen Motion carried unanimously.

Jim Romeo said off-road motorcyclists need to be as organized as the snowmobilers. Motorcyclists need to push responsible use and mitigation of noise. He is not optimistic about getting trails in New York.

Bill Lasher discussed promoting design provisions for trails on bridge and road projects. He said waiting for projects to be announced is too late, that trail groups and councils should approach local officials early.

Dan Gruen wants the Empire State Trail to remain open to horses where it has been traditionally. He also mentioned that a bridge at the Otter Creek Horse trails suffered a washout this year.

Josh Wilson discussed the Barkeaters Trails Alliance and the 34-mile Jackrabbit Ski Trail. His group is responsible for maintaining over 50 miles of ski trails. Barkeaters also has established 50 miles of mountain bike trails. DEC Guidelines for single-trail trails in the Catskills and Adirondacks have been released..

Jeff Binga discussed NYSORVA supporting local clubs regarding insurance and safety. NYSORVA retooled its safety website. He said there are over 110,000 registered ATVs in New York State, and likely closer to 500,000 including those unregistered. He cited figures showing outdoor recreation accounting for over two percent of the national GDP. Jeff is still pushing an ATV Reform Act to develop infrastructure and trails for ATVs. He would like to see separate vehicle classes for ATVs and UTVs.

Tom Casey mentioned the passing of Gil Bergen, former Superintendent of Connetquot River State Park Preserve, who passed away recently. Gil worked in the park from 1945 until recently. He also reported that the 12.5-mile Ray Corwin Trail from Rocky Point to Yaphank will officially open on April 28. The Pine Barrens Core Preservation Area will be expanded by 1,100 acres with the addition of forested land in Shoreham. Tom said there should be a “tail to the trail”—a Long Island extension of the Empire State Trail. Ivan Vamos noted that Paul Winkeller and the Trust for Public Land are working on an extension.

Carol Schmelz submitted her report in writing prior to the meeting:

Last fall at the NYS Trails Council Meeting in October 2017 I learned that equestrians were left off the outdoor recreation research surveys for a decade. As a follow-up I attended the Coalition of State Horse Councils (CSHC) meeting in Lexington, KY in November to make other states across the country aware of this problem.

1. Sunday, November 12, 2017 - I explained that the Erie Canalway Trail had been designated a "National Heritage Trail." I asked if anyone else had such a trail in their state. Our problem in NY is that equines have been on the towpath for 200 years and are no longer permitted on the trail now. I have been working to have equestrians included for over 20 years. My question for you is how can a trail be designated a national heritage trail if the equines that made it and used it are not allowed on it anymore? I would like clarification on this designation.

2. Another issue involves the omission of all equine activities on the Outdoor Recreation Research Surveys for the past decade. My suggestion to the American Horse Council (AHC) and the State Horse Councils is to invite that organization to do a presentation at the next CSHC meeting. There are a multitude of equine activities that are not trail activities, however they are outdoor recreation activities. These activities include hunter/jumper, dressage, reining, team penning, barrel racing, and carriage/wagon driving. Trail riding is but one component under EQUINE activities. Many horse owners tend to be older folks (45-85 years old) who have the money and time to recreate with a horse. This is when the strength of an equine can compensate for arthritis, heart problems, and cancer that may develop later in life and still keep horse owners physically active. Those age groups seem to be ignored on the survey. As a follow-up to my suggestion the AHC contacted Outdoor Foundation and the US Department of the Interior.

3. Headlines in Buffalo News February 27, 2018 – Towns are Rewriting their Playbooks on Recreation - Aquatic Centers? Ice Rinks? Nope. Residents want trails.

4. In June, 2018 at the next CSHC meeting in Washington, DC the Outdoor Recreation Research Organization will be doing a presentation for the group.

5. Bureau of Economic Analysis studied outdoor recreation under the category Industry. Outdoor Recreation accounts for 2% of the gross domestic product of our country. Motorized vehicles account for \$59 billion with RV's accounting for \$30 billion of that number. Another study is being done this year. You can look at the study at the website bea.gov and scroll across the top to INDUSTRY. They are looking for comments or questions by April 27, 2018. These can be emailed to outdoorrecreation@bea.gov.

6. February 2018 Headlines - The Outdoor Recreation Roundhouse Industry calls for Creation of Outdoor Recreation Offices in all 50 States. More information about this newly formed group can be found on their website www.funoutdoors.com.

7. National Trails Day is June 2, 2018. Last year the entire month of June was proclaimed by the Governor Great Outdoors Month. Enjoy!!!

8. The Western NY Land Conservancy, for the first time in its history, protected a trail, rather than a tract of land. Carol sent them a check and a letter commending the change of policy.

Agency Reports

OPRHP Planning Updates: Chris Morris mentioned the International Trails Symposium in Syracuse in 2019. I Love My Park Day is May 5. Chris suggested dedicating half of the next meeting to discussing the off-road vehicle group suggestions. He solicited ideas for presentations at the next meeting.

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor: Brian Yates displayed a new logo for New York State water trails. ECNHC is in a design competition for facilities for trail users.

OPRHP Snowmobile Program: Nicole Unser said in the next year she would like to get involved in trail maintenance. She also said there needs to be coordination among user groups to repair ATV damage on trails. She then discussed chain saw certification for maintenance.

National Park Service: Karl Beard discussed the Rivers and Trails Conservation program, which offers planning and organizing assistance to trail groups. Due date is June 30. See www.nps.gov/rtca. He mentioned several projects currently underway. He is also working with the Seneca Nation for trails on their land. Urban projects include Rome and Troy.

Hudson River Valley Greenway: Beth Campochiaro said the Greenway has \$500,000 in grant money for trail projects. She distributed a handout on the Empire State Trail, which she said is on time and on budget. She discussed the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail in an old trolley corridor. See www.ahettrail.org.

New Business: Jeff Binga suggested pooling grant money from all Trails Council groups to purchase property.

Jerry Smith suggested a total indemnification process for state trails. Google Butler Motorcycle Maps.

Anne O'Dell discussed the Mid-Atlantic Backcountry Discovery Route, an unpaved route which starts in Tennessee and stops at New York.

Next meeting: 10:30 AM, October 20 tentatively at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center.

Adjournment: Motion: Tom Casey Second: Samantha Langton