

**NEW YORK STATE TRAILS COUNCIL MEETING
NYS DEC/OPRHP Offices
625 Broadway, Albany, NY
October 15, 2016 10:30 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order

Correction/Approval of Minutes of April 16, 2015 Meeting

Motion to approve minutes: Jane Daniels Second: Quinn Wright
Motion passed unanimously.

Council Attendance:

4-Wheel Drive – Todd Syska	Universal Access – Denis Livsey
All-Terrain Vehicles – Jeff Binga	Water Trails – Tom Casey
Equestrian – Dan Gruen, Carol Schmelz, Mark Wehnau	FHWA -
Hiking – Jane Daniels, Quinn Wright	National Park Service – Karl Beard
Nordic Skiing -	HRV Greenway – Elizabeth Campochiaro
Off-Highway Motorcycles -	Canal Corporation –
Off-road Bicycling – Craig Fury, Michael Vitti	NYSDEC – Rob Messenger
On-road Bicycling – Samantha Langton, Ivan Vamos	NYSOPRHP – Chris Fallon, Chris Morris
Running – Hugh Davis	NYSDOT -
Snowmobiles – Dominic Jacangelo, Anne O’Dell	PTNY – Greg Francese
Snowshoeing – Katie Henrickson	ECNHC – Brian Yates
	Presenter: Geoff Peppel

Others in attendance: Louis Gregori and Kevin Malone, Putnam Riders MTB Organization

Presentation

Universal Design in Outdoor Recreation: Geoff Peppel, Inclusive Recreation Resource Center
See website, www.inclusiverec.org.

One in five people in the U.S. have a disability. IRRC conducts inclusivity assessments of parks and trails, provides technical assistance, and maintains an online database of inclusive recreational sites. It has trained over 4,500 Certified Inclusivity Assessors and has formed collaborative partnerships with DEC, OPRHP, youth groups and other agencies. It conducted 400 assessments of DEC and OPRHP sites in 2014-15.

IRRC’s seven principles for design are: equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive design, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low effort, and size and space for appropriate use.

Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (GODA), finalized in 2013, applies to Federal agencies or entities receiving Federal funds. Technical requirements involve surface, tread width, slopes and cross slopes, obstacles, passing and turning space, resting intervals and signage.

IRRC devised a simplified, more efficient assessment process and form.

Geoff directed the Council to check out the app for GPS Backpacker Trails Lite, www.trimbleoutdoors.com/products/backpackergptrails. Unfortunately, the site will be closing, and IRRC is looking for other partners to develop another app.

Geoff discussed Inclusion U. training, which is available to all. Those who complete the training can submit results to IRRC for inclusion in its database.

Denis Livsey offered a presentation from a trail user's perspective. He emphasized the inevitability of change. By working for accessible trails, "we are working on access for our future selves."

Scheduling of Spring and Fall 2017 Meeting Dates

The Council chose **April 8 and October 14**. Chris Morris will propose several meeting places via the internet.

Lunch Break

Delegate Reports

Carol Schmelz introduced new members: Hugh Davis, representing runners; Jeff Binga, representing ATV-OHV riders.

Samantha Langton discussed the Hudson Valley and Wallkill Valley rail trails. Her town has approved an extension that will partially close the gap between them. She is working on getting better road markings. She is looking for projects in the area suitable for local scout groups.

Jane Daniels reported that there were 22 days when more than 1,000 people climbed Breakneck Ridge, and one with over 1,500. The NY-NJ Trail Conference will be launching its new website in November.

Dominic Jacangelo thanked the Hudson Valley Greenway for a grant for the Rensselaer Plateau. Snowmobile registrations and miles traveled were down severely this past winter due to lack of snow. Changes in state law will help direct more funds to trails. Snowmobilers pushed for legislation to allow a small income tax credit for landowners who allow snowmobiles on their property. The spring educational forum was a success. Motorized snow bikes are a problem on snowmobile trails for a variety of reasons. Fat-tire bicycles are also gaining in popularity but are not a problem for snowmobilers.

Denis Livsey will visit Boreas Pond to investigate closer access for those with disability.

Ivan Vamos discussed trying to get a safe passing law through the legislature. Fifteen million dollars in Federal funds will be available for trail projects such as the Ocean Parkway bike path near Jones Beach. The Norfolk Southern railroad has purchased some rights-of-way that may eliminate a rail trail in the Albany area. He passed around literature on Complete Streets and the NYC bike and pedestrian program for the Council to inspect.

Craig Fury asked Dominic Jacangelo for further thoughts on fat-tire bicycles on snowmobile trails. Dominic replied that there is no issue on public land, but that there could be difficulties with private landowners, where permissions may be more specific and limited. He suggested that bicyclists might want to join snowmobile clubs to support trail grooming and to be covered by their insurance.

Mike Vitti discussed DEP land in Putnam County long used by bikes but now closed to use. Mike also discussed trails in Sterling Forest and Minnewaska and a new mountain bike club in the Palisades region. He noted that there is now a map of the approved trails in Bethpage State Park, completed with the assistance of the L.I. Greenbelt Trail Conference. Mike suggested that we ask a representative from I Love NY to come to a meeting so we can better acquaint the organization with trails.

Jeff Binga said that NYSORVA's trails are 95% on private land. He administers NYSORVA's liability insurance program. NYSORVA is proposing a bill to create an ATV trail fund. ATV laws haven't changed in years, and new types of vehicles, such as side-by-sides, are as yet unclassified. He advocated free ATV training paid for by the ATV registration fund. He envisions ATV parks statewide, diverting traffic away from the Catskills, Adirondacks and other sensitive areas. Dominic Jacangelo said Jeff needs to get parcels into the State Open Space Plan that are consistent with the plan. However, the acquisition committee generally looks at properties for their ecological, not recreational, value. Rob Messenger said the state would be amenable to an ATV trail connectors, but not to places in the state forests where ATVs would just drive in circles, an unsustainable practice.

Dan Gruen asked about the classifications of state land, with regard to Boreas Pond. Wilderness does not allow mechanized use. Wild Forest does. Adirondack Park Agency has control over the classification of Boreas Pond. Dominic Jacangelo says the proposals for classification have varying mixes of Wilderness and Wild Forest. Dan advocated for horse trailer access, as Boreas is too remote for most people to ride in.

Quinn Wright discussed the number of actual trail users vs. the number who sign in at registers. He has been trying to aggregate accurate data on trail use and its economic benefits.

Carole Schmelz discussed Knox Farm State Park. The equine community wants the stable area and adjacent lands limited to equine use. Additionally, requests have been made by the group to have a preregistration requirement for horses entering the park (proof of Coggins & rabies shots) eliminated as no other state park or DEC land in NYS require this. It imposes undue restrictions on visitors who want to ride horses in the park and are unaware of this requirement.

Carol also mentioned that the Chautauqua County trail system just opened; three of four phases are done.

Lastly, in Otter Creek, the north/south routes are showing increased wear such as exposed roots and washed out areas. The problem trails are Streamside near the bridge, Chase Creek, Icicle, and Erie Canal Trail. Additionally, the bridge over Erie Canal Trail needs to be widened and the side rails need to be made higher to be made safer and more navigable by horses.

Tom Casey reported that kayaking is increasingly popular on Long Island. The Bethpage Master Plan mentioned by Mike Vitti was 22 years in the making. A DEC multi-use lot on NY 25 in Middle Island is now open. Southern Pine Beetle continues to be a problem, but the spread had slowed. The Pine Barrens Commission is picking pine cones to be sent to the Saratoga Nursery for planting, with transplanting on Long Island in the future.

Carol Schmelz read Len Howard's letter of resignation from the Trail Council, in which he was highly critical of what he perceives as the state's and the Council's antipathy to off-road motorcycling and other motorized trail uses. His letter is attached below.

Agency Reports

OPRHP – Chris Morris discussed the status of Master Plans, per his handout. Black Diamond Rail Trail in the Ithaca area is ready for a ribbon-cutting.

DEC – Rob Messenger said DEC will be hiring a planner. He distributed a list of Draft and Final UMPs.

Hudson River Valley Greenway – Elizabeth Campochiaro announced a new website, www.hudsonrivergreewaywatertrail.org. Thanks to the EPF fund, HRVG will be awarding \$250,000 in grants.

National Parks Service – Karl Beard said NPS is focusing on a 125-mile section of the Erie Canal system from Waterford westward as a National Recreational Water Trail. NPS is working on reopening mountain bike trails in Roosevelt-Hyde Park National Park. which had been closed for being out of compliance. However, some old trails there show evidence of unauthorized mountain bike use, so that a new plan would be out of compliance.

OPRHP - Chris Fallon said OPRHP and DEC need to get together to discuss connector trails.

PTNY – Greg Francese announced deadlines for grant proposals.

Old Business

Jane Daniels reminded the Council that we should create a succession plan for the Council.

Motion to adjourn: Tom Casey Second: Anne O'Dell

Next Meeting: Saturday, April 8, 10:30 AM at a location to be determined.

Letter of Resignation from Len Howard:

October 6, 2016

Dear Trails Council members and participating state government representatives:

I wish to resign my position as a delegate to the New York State Trails Council (the "Trails Council") effective immediately. As you recall I have been an Off-highway Motorcycle delegate for approximately 15 years.

It is my observation that the Trails Council as a whole wishes in no way to contribute to the furtherance or betterment of off-highway motorcycling ("OHM"). To the contrary, my experience with New York's governmental entities ("the State") that dominate the Trails Council has been that OHM is opposed at almost every level and at every turn. This is inconsistent with my understanding of the Trails Council's purpose and, by the way, with that manner in which many other states' trail councils function not only nationally but also in our region.

To a large extent I blame this unfortunate situation on those individuals in the executive branch of the State and their underlings who serve at the pleasure of the Governor. There are also several if not many other user groups on the Trails Council whose lead organizations are dedicated to thwarting

opportunities for motorized recreation at every opportunity. (That said, I hasten to add that several Trails Council delegates not associated with motorized interests have been helpful and supportive over the years, for which I am most grateful.) From my perspective, a cabal of governmental entities and private sector interests coordinate efforts to limit and/or deny access and diminish motorized recreation activities to the fullest extent. I am confident that they are proud of their many achievements in suppressing motorized recreation.

Fifteen years ago when I joined the Trails Council I was naive enough to think that the State could partner with the OHM user group, as it partners with many non-motorized user groups, to create opportunities for trail access. Further, I along with others wanted to take on some of the problems associated with motorized recreational activities by utilizing education, training, coordination and growing a more robust user organization (NYSORVA) to effect positive changes. Sadly I (we) found no partner for this endeavor in the Trail Council as a whole, nor at any level of the executive branch beyond a few individuals who were indeed quite inspiring. Far beyond that, the blatant discrimination, suppression and opposition that the State practiced against wheeled and motorized recreation was truly shocking!

While in no way causing the same harm and detriment as other more depraved forms of discrimination that are evident in our society, the State's discrimination against the motorized off-road community is nonetheless very painful to bear. The bitterness, distrust and sense of disenfranchisement that are bred by this discrimination are palpable, widespread, and I expect these sentiments will endure among many for at least as long as the State's treatment remains as regressive and misguided as it is today.

So I leave the Trails Council now with obvious regrets and with the certain knowledge that the State has been poorly served by its shallow and discriminatory efforts against my user group. Rather than outreach and engaging with the OHM community to ameliorate issues and expand recreation opportunities, the State has instead garnered the ill will of a major segment of its citizenry. Having had a major hand in opposing and discriminating against the OHM community with great success, the State will surely understand that going forward I can foresee only a justifiable de minimis level of cooperation.

This writer will never again be willing to partner with the State toward fostering better relations with the OHM community and achieving positive outcomes on relevant issues. In my opinion the State has demonstrated that it is not worthy of my efforts in this regard nor of any others' similar efforts.

I ask that this be read aloud at the October 15, 2016 meeting be made part of the Trails Council's permanent record.

Respectfully submitted,

Len Howard
OHM Delegate
NYS Trails Council