

NEW YORK STATE TRAILS COUNCIL MEETING
Five Rivers Conservation Center
56 Game Farm Road, Delmar, NY 12054
October 19, 2019 10:30 am – 3:00 pm

Council Attendance:

4-Wheel Drive – Todd Syska

All-Terrain Vehicles –

Equestrian –Dan Gruen, Carol Schmelz

Hiking –Quinn Wright

Motorized Trail Bikes –

Nordic Skiing –

Off-Highway Motorcycles –

Off-road Bicycling – Samantha Langton, Michael Vitti

On-road Bicycling – Ivan Vamos

Running –

Snowmobiles –Dominic Jacangelo

Snowshoeing –

Universal Access –

Water Trails – Tom Casey, Mike Prescott

ECNHC –

FHWA -

National Park Service –

HRV Greenway –

NYS Canal Corporation –

NY-NJ Trail Conference –

NYSDEC –

NYSOPRHP – Chris Morris, Tom Hotaling, Nicole Unser

NYSDOT –

PTNY – Dylan Carey

Others in Attendance: Joellen Lampman

Call to Order & Welcome:

Carol Schmelz called the meeting to order at 10:40 AM.

Correction/Approval of Minutes of April 6, 2019 Meeting:

Motion to approve minutes: Ivan Vamos

Second: Samantha Langton

Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements:

Chris Morris reported that Anne O'Dell has stepped down from the Trails Council, as she has moved to Florida.

Chris noted we have vacancies on the Council, and the delegates should seek people to nominate.

Presentation: Tick Knowledge and Safety: Joellen Lampman, NYS Integrated Pest Management Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension (Email: jkz6@cornell.edu)

The objectives of IPM are to reduce human exposure to ticks, make tick avoidance easy to understand and accomplish, and promote better pest management.

The ticks of concern in New York are:

Dog ticks—large, easy to spot; like tall grass

Lone-star—aggressive hunters, attracted to CO₂; found in forests or fields, especially along edges

Black-legged (Deer)—needs high humidity, prefers sandy areas; most active in spring and fall

Asian Long-horned—found here since about 2010; found in woods, fields, lawns; parthenogenic; deer, mammals and livestock are hosts, but they don't seem to like people.

When ticks attach themselves, they inject antihistamines, anticoagulants and anesthetics, plus a variety of proteins that are little understood so far. Contrary to popular belief, the head never gets embedded in the skin, only the mouth parts, which are not inherently harmful.

Other facts:

Over 90% of white-footed mice can be infected with Lyme disease; about 50% carry three pathogens. One deer can account for half a million ticks. Ticks are active from 37 degrees and up. Adult ticks are twice as likely to carry Lyme, but more people contract it from nymphs and larvae, as they are not as readily detectable. Lyme generally takes 36-72 hours for transmission; Powassan virus can be transmitted in 15 minutes!

Prevention:

Avoid tick areas, especially woodland edges. Stick to wider trails. Wear light-colored clothing and tuck pant legs into socks. Repellents for the skin include DEET, IR3535, Picaridin, and oil of lemon eucalyptus. Permethrin is a repellent for clothing only. After exposure, put clothing in a dryer before washing until it reaches 125 degrees. Shower to remove crawling ticks, and do a body inspection.

Attached ticks:

A needle-nosed tweezer is the best tool for removal. Do not squeeze the tick. Save the tick in a sealed, dated plastic bag with a moist piece of tissue. If symptoms appear, take the tick to Cornell Cooperative Extension for identification, or send to SUNY Upstate Medical University's Citizen Science Tick Testing. See <https://thangmani-lab.com> for details. Results are returned via email.

Tick research:

Much more research is needed. Current studies are conflicting and have yielded spotty results. Sixty percent of Lyme cases originate at home. Lawn spraying seems only marginally effective. Fungal sprays are being studied. Tick tubes (Damminix) are somewhat effective but have their own drawbacks. Four-posters for deer are expensive, and there are fears they may make ticks permethrin-resistant. To reduce the tick population, we need to reduce deer density to 6-8 per mile.

Joellen recommends www.thetickapp.org for download. See also www.dontgettickedny.org (the IPM website) and www.tickencounter.org (from the University of Rhode Island).

Selection of 2020 Meeting Dates: The Council agreed on April 18 and October 17.

Spring 2020 Elections for Chair and Vice Chair: We need to select and approve a Nominating Committee. Nominations must be received 45 days prior to the election at the April 2020 meeting.

Lunch Break

Delegate Reports:

Ivan Vamos passed around the NYS Plan for Road Safety. So-called vulnerable users are 18% of casualties, with 11% being bicycles and pedestrians, whose injuries generally cost more to treat than those in automobile accidents. He is working to get the state to spend more on safety and complete streets.

Quinn Wright reported on a first-ever Trails Day in partnership with Steuben County. Finger Lakes Trails Association is hiring a full-time marketing director. They are developing a plan to have DEC-certified guides for tourist hikes.

Dan Gruen mentioned a one-day trail stewardship workshop by the Pennsylvania Equine Council. He wondered if DEC and New York State Parks could sponsor a similar workshop.

Dan said several state parks are discouraging horse use. Harriman has shut it down; Fahnestock has limited parking, effectively discouraging horse riding; Minnewaska has closed trails because of the

presence of snakes and has signs prohibiting trailers. Chris Morris noted that the signage problem at Minnewaska might be related to visitor center construction. He encouraged Dan to outline what he would want to do at a stewardship workshop.

Dan also mentioned difficulties at Frontier Town. (See Carol Schmelz's report below.)

Dominic Jacangelo reported on a chain saw workshop through the NY Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health that costs only \$25, with classes coming up in various locations in the state. For details go to chainsawsafety@bassett.org.

Dominic also mentioned a court case regarding cutting a trail that classified as "timber" any wooded growth, including seedlings. This adversely affects all trail planning. The State is appealing the decision. The hope is that we revert to the old standard of 3" above breast height for a tree to be "timber."

He discussed yet-unresolved plans for access in the Boreas Pond area and a bridge project still tied up in a court case.

He announced snowmobile educational events on January 25 at Grafton State Park, January 26 at Hudson River Crossing State Park, and at Schuylerville plus Pulaski and Tioga in February.

Michael Vitti discussed the Port Jefferson to Wading River Rail Trail, 11 miles, now under construction. The Ocean Parkway trail is being extended 10 miles to Captree State Park. Nassau County received two grants to build a trail along the old Motor Parkway route. He mentioned the Empire Trail extension from Manhattan to Montauk.

There was a ribbon-cutting for new trails in Port Washington at the old Colonial Sand Mine.

Mike said he will help Fats in the Cats on a trail project.

Mike Prescott said the North Country Canoe Trail is seeing more and more use. New York State's portion is pretty much all set except for an area around the Saranac River. He said DEC has done fantastic work on extending the road access near Boreas Pond.

Mike would like the abuse and overuse of the High Peaks area to be put on the agenda for a future meeting.

Samantha Langton discussed property acquisitions and trail work at Jockey Hills and Onteora, near Kingston. Access is now easier, and the trails are attracting more beginning riders and hikers. Fats in the Cats is trying to facilitate conversations with local residents to discuss road improvements, as traffic is now a problem. She also mentioned that the contractor cut the trails incorrectly, leading to eventual maintenance problems for Fats in the Cats. She will discuss with McRae Burnham.

Carol Schmelz submitted her Equestrian Report in writing in advance of the meeting:

Frontier Town: Horse trailers must pay \$40 for one spot per night. Equine campers would like the option of paying for electric or not, like at other campsites. A suggestion was made to put a lock on the electric box and charge \$2 for a key if campers need electric. Get \$2 back when key is turned in.

Straight back and forth trails make for a boring ride. Circular trails are more pleasant. The trail system needs to be expanded with more options for circles of varying lengths. Twenty-foot-wide spaces leave no room to put an awning down and no shade. Dogs will cook if left inside the trailer. Camping spots are supposed to be widened to 40 feet next year.

Campers must leave sites by 11 AM. That's problematic when you have to break camp and move horses to ride that day.

Otter Creek: There needs to be additional signage in each of the three horse camping areas which spell out to riders "Overnight Horse Camping Only." The Day Use area should be marked "Day Use Only" and

have a kiosk for people to sign in there. The day use area should also be clearly marked with an arrow pointing to it when riders are entering the trail system. Day use trailers are taking up too much space in the overnight camping area, which makes it difficult for overnight campers to have room to set up camp.

Should times be posted for generator use?

Toilet paper should be restocked on Fridays for weekend crowds.

Phillips Creek: Trail work has been done by DEC on Trails 5 & 6 to remediate the wet and sloppy conditions that exist in this area in Allegany County. These projects are ongoing for next year.

Lake Luzerne DEC: All corrals were removed to get rid of ground bees and wasps. This is a safety issue because horses go into a bucking frenzy when stung by bees. Stalls will be put up for the horses for next year. The camping fee is only \$25 nightly at Luzerne. Why is there such a disparity in prices for horse camping?

Outdoor Recreation Survey: You can see a breakdown **by state** for all types of recreation at <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>. Equestrian use has been included in this survey.

Access the Adirondacks Alliance: Should the Trails Council support the alliance with the other 31 other groups advocating reasonable access to the Forest Preserve? For more information about this initiative see www.accessadk.com.

CRT: The Coalition for Recreational Trails is a federation of over 500 national and regional trail related organizations whose members work together to build awareness and understanding of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). This is a program that returns federal gasoline taxes paid by off-highway recreational users to the states for trail development and maintenance. Currently there is an initiative to have the ACTUAL gasoline taxes spent on recreation transferred to the Highway Trust Fund to be included in the Recreational Trails Program. At this time only an estimated amount of non-highway fuel taxes has been transferred to the RTP. To read more about activities of the Coalition for Recreational Trails and its work or to join this initiative, go to the American Trails.org website or google Coalition for Recreational Trails.

Tom Casey mentioned improvements at Connetquot River State Park Preserve, including the renovated mill, work at the trout hatchery and house tours. Visitation is up and should draw in more hikers and equestrians for the park's 50 miles of trails.

An Eagle Scout constructed a wetland bridge at Arthur Kunz County Park on the Long Island Trail.

The Trust for Public Land initially did not seem to be aware of Pine Barrens Protection Act. We helped arrange a meeting between TPL and the Pine Barrens Commission, but TPL canceled shortly before the date. Hikers have not been very enthused, as the trail will be along roads in many areas.

Suffolk County's Hike-Bike Technical Advisory Committee is inventorying all trails in the county and creating accessible web information.

Attempts to start a Friends of the Pine Barrens are still ongoing.

Michael Vitti mentioned the Trail Forks app, which covers all kinds of trails and has a place on the site for donating to the relevant trail organization for each trail.

Quinn Wright said he feels the Trails Council's advice isn't carrying any weight with the state government beyond DEC and State Parks. Dominic Jacangelo replied that the value of the Council is to discuss problems and ideas of mutual concern. Chris Morris said the agencies do act upon our suggestions, while Ivan Vamos noted that the park agencies are not encouraged or even permitted to do

more. Carol Schmelz pointed out that PTNY can lobby the legislature, and Dylan Carey expanded on PTNY's role. Tom Hotaling said our meetings are required for us to receive RTP funding. The Council might discuss a plan for more legislative action.

Agency Reports:

Parks and Trails New York: Dylan Carey said PTNY now has a paper map of the Erie Canalway Trail. It is working out its advocacy agenda for the coming year, focusing on multi-use trails. Monday, March 16 will be Trails Advocacy Day in Albany. Dan Gruen asked why trail count estimates in the Empire Trail publication don't include equestrians. Carol Schmelz noted that horses used the Erie Canal for decades, but now that the trail is paved it's too crowded.

OPRHP RTP Grants updates: Tom Hotaling reported on the number of grant applications and the amount available. He discussed RTP funding legislation sponsored by Senator Klobuchar and said the Council might wish to support it.

OPRHP planning updates: Chris Morris reviewed the status of Master Plans and Management Plans, as shown on the chart on the reverse of the meeting agenda.

Chris said he supported Quinn Wright's idea of the Council getting more involved with legislative action. Samantha Langton suggested we discuss that in lieu of a presentation at the next meeting. Chris said State Parks will have to redo the Statewide Trails Plan this coming year; the Council will be vital in providing input and comments.

Erie Canalway:

Chris Morris read an email from Mona Caron, who was not able to attend. The Canalway is developing a water trail for paddler and has published a *NYS Canalway Water Trail Guidebook and Navigational Maps*. It also launched www.NyCanalMap.com for all users. A signage plan for 2020 will cover the Erie, Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca and Champlain canals.

The Canalway Challenge begun in May 2019 encourages users to track their miles along the canalway trail and water trail. More than 1,000 participants have completed 15, 90, 180 or 360-mile challenges so far.

Next meeting: April 18, 2020, 10:30 AM at Five Rivers Conservation Center

Adjournment: Motion: Tom Casey Second: Mike Vitti