

NEW YORK STATE TRAILS COUNCIL MEETING
Meeting Held Virtually via WebEx
October 17, 2020 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Council Attendance:

4-Wheel Drive – Todd Syska

All-Terrain Vehicles – Jeff Binga

Equestrian – Carol Schmelz, Bill Lasher,
Dan Gruen

Hiking –Quinn Wright, Andrew Hamlin

Nordic Skiing –

Off-Highway Motorcycles –

Off-road Bicycling – Samantha Langton, Michael
Vitti (portion)

On-road Bicycling – Ivan Vamos, Harvey Botzman

Running –

Snowmobiles –Dominic Jacangelo

Snowshoeing –

Universal Access –

Water Trails – Tom Casey (portion)

ECNHC – Mona Caron

FHWA -

National Park Service –

HRV Greenway – Beth Campochiaro

NYS Canal Corporation –

NYSDEC – McCrea Burnham

NYSOPRHP – Chris Morris, Nicole Unser

NYS DOT – Karen Lorf

PTNY – Dylan Carey

Others in Attendance: Christine Walters (NY-NJ Trail Conf.), Stephanie Campbell (NCTA)

Call to Order & Welcome:

Meeting was called to order at 10:06 AM.

Correction/Approval of Minutes of October 19, 2019 Meeting (April 2020 meeting cancelled):

Motion to approve minutes: Jeff Binga Second: Ivan Vamos

Motion passed unanimously.

Selection of Meeting Dates for 2021:

April 10 and October 16, 2021 (some delegates had conflicts with April 17)

*In person or virtual meeting TBD

Announcements:

Chris Morris welcomed Harvey Botzman as a new delegate nominee for on-road cycling. Harvey gave a brief introduction and was accepted as a on-road cycling delegate.

2020 Elections:

Nominees include: Samantha Langton, Chair and Carol Schmelz, Vice Chair.

Dominic Jacangelo motioned for a vote on the proposed nominees. Jeff Binga second.

Proposed slate of nominees passed unanimously.

Delegate Reports Delegates submitted the reports below electronically prior to the meeting.

Water Trails: Tom Casey

Suffolk County's Blueways Trail Committee consists of representatives from the county, consulting firms and paddlers. It's a year-long project intended to promote ecotourism among the paddling community. Suffolk has almost 1,000 miles of coastline.

With extensive public input, the committee inventoried 259 existing and potential launching sites in the county. It then selected 24 priority sites, with an emphasis on those with a proximity to villages and hamlets where paddlers might patronize shops and restaurants. After some tweaking, that list was whittled down to 20.

Next comes a final profile for each site that will include:

- evaluation of parking access, especially for non-residents
- possible enhancements to the launch sites, such as rails and floating docks
- signage with maps and safety info
- universal access accommodations
- possibly wash-down stations

The profiles are due in October, a Blueways Trail plan by the end of November, and a final public meeting in January 2021. The intent is to get these 20 sites up and running and hope for future expansion of the project.

Of course, all this is contingent on funding, and each site will have its own RFP and permitting process. Good luck with all that in these hard times!

Hiking: Donna Chapman

Trails were off limits to Volunteers in most areas March-June. Volunteers returned for maintenance with proper PPE but shelters and privies on National Park Service lands on the Appalachian Trail remain closed and no maintenance is being performed on these sites.

All trails have reported increased usage with a lot of impacts on tread ways and developments of many herd paths on trail less peaks especially in the Catskills. Catskill directors are hopeful that the Governors Catskill Park high use commission will start soon.

Increase noted in sightings of the spotted lantern fly. 11 counties in NYS now have had sightings. These ravenous bugs feed on over 70 species of plants, including maple, walnut, fruit trees, and even grapevines and hops. SLF physically stress plants by draining vital nutrients and leaving sticky excrement that promotes the growth of harmful black mold. Should lanternfly proceed unchecked through New York, both the environmental and economic impacts of a lanternfly feeding frenzy could be significant. If you think you've seen a spotted lanternfly or an egg mass, please send a picture and GPS location to spottedlanternfly@dec.ny.gov in New York.

Equestrian Trails: Carol Schmelz

1. Allegany County Report by Pauline Burnes- The NYS Horse Council has a very good working relationship with NYSDEC Allegany Unit here (Region 9). There is a new Supervising Forester, Greg Muller. He and Theresa Draves, Forester Trainee I and Nate Tucker have all be very helpful. Trail 5 from the horse campground has received drainage improvements, and pull overs were placed on Stewart Forest Rd, also improvements done to that road. We still have to complete the Trail 4 Improvement Project, I had various problems this year finding the right Contractor to do the work within the budget we have. It is on hold now until the Construction season of 2021.

Planning on having some Alfred State College students assist with some trail maintenance this coming Saturday, clearing debris, adding markers that are missing before the cross country skiing season.

W. Almond Trail System still has a lot of wet areas, Trail 6 was re-routed near Palmer's Pond and it is a much better trail now.

Pauline has been trying to interest the newly formed Trails and Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee to the Allegany County Legislature (She is the equestrian representative) in forming a "Friends" group for trails on DEC forest lands. Parks and Trails NY is very interested, but money is on

hold right now. I have to contact DEC to see if they are interested. Bringing together the different user groups could be very beneficial. I know you recommended the "Friends" group a couple of years ago.

2. Southern Tier Rail Trail- I listened to the presentation online and gave contact information for horse camping and trail access to the McGee Rail/Trail in Little Valley. I also referred Go Bike to online studies which was done in 2005 by Terry Martin and again in 2017 by another party. All those plans are online for Go Bike to access and compare with what they already have. Go Bike asked for specific input from equestrians that live in Orchard Park area near the rail/trail. I presented that request to the WNY Horse Council so they could reach out to members in their database to get the needed input.

3. Canalway Trail- The trail collapse at Dunnigan & Bear Ridge Road in Pendleton has not been repaired yet.

4. Allegany State Park – Markers needed after the second bridge on Blacksnake Mountain Trail (#3). People are wandering off on the well-trodden path to the left after not finding trail markers which were supposed to guide them to the right. I reported my concerns to Red House Supervisor by telephone. He said he would be going right out to look at the situation and have it corrected.

Snowmobiling: Dominic Jacangelo

2019-20 was a less than stellar year. Registrations fell to 96,000 while snowfall was continuously interrupted by rain. Lake effect snows in Tug Hill failed to materialize into late in the season and event then were disrupted by rain.

NYSSA/SLEDNY did develop and release a snowmobile trail app. This app was priced at \$4.99 and was linked to real time information that most clubs would import into the system. Information shows open and closed trails, hazards and club trails if entered by the club. Works on and off a cell signal. App to be reintroduced this November with new features. 8000 plus apps were sold in 2019-20.

The last several weeks of the season was lost to the pandemic as clubs showed trails as closed. There was a concern to not encourage people coming from other states since there were no services in the areas that had snow.

2020-21: Hope is for a good snow year. Everyone seems interested in outdoor recreation and our memberships and registration are running ahead of last year. There is a concern over our regular trail maintenance grants. We are working on avoiding any hold back of funds.

DEC proposed an extended hunting season to go from December 26 through the first of the year. NYSSA opposes this since our private landowners do not want snowmobiles on their property until hunting is over. Extended season is for longbow and muzzle loading in the Southern Zone. We would lose a week of snowmobiling under this proposal. A \$13 million dollar impact.

DOT will shortly begin to pull up rails and ties from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid on the Remsen to Lake Placid Travel Corridor. Will open up the area to a longer season of snowmobiling. Hope to ride as soon as the project is completed (December 2020) and sufficient snow is on the corridor.

Agency Reports:

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor: Mona Caron

1) Water Trail Signs

Erie Canalway recently installed new signs to mark the NYS Canalway Water Trail at more than 140 launch sites along the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego canals. The blue and yellow signs are intended to help paddlers identify safe put-in and take-out sites from the water and assist with wayfinding to launch sites from land.

Water trail signs are designed to work in tandem with the NYS Canalway Water Trail Guidebook and Navigational Map Set and the online www.nycanalmap.com.

2) Adopt the Water Trail Stewardship Program

Erie Canalway is developing a framework for a water trail stewardship program to launch in Spring 2021. At the present time, we're conducting research/interviews with stakeholders, partners and the paddling community to gather information for an organizational blueprint for the program.

3) Hand Launch Design Guidelines

We reissued a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking written proposals for illustrated guidelines for facilities to launch canoes, kayaks, and small-craft tailored to the varied conditions of the NYS Canal System. The guidelines are intended to help organizations and communities plan and design launch areas unique to the Water Trail. Proposals are due November 20, 2020. The RFP is posted:

<https://eriecanalway.org/our-work/contracting-opportunities>

4) Canalway Challenge

In its second year, the Canalway Challenge has been encouraging participants to sign up for a mileage challenge, then walk, run, bike and/or paddle the Canalway Trails and Water Trails to achieve their mileage goals while also learning about canal history and heritage and sampling the local flavor. "Hot on the Trail" gives users nine categories to explore while on the trail. So far the Canalway Challenge has seen 157,785 miles pledged, 63,960 miles completed and 991 challenges created.

www.canalwaychallenge.org.

OPRHP RTP Program: Thomas Hotaling

OPRHP will proceed with a local solicitation for RTP grant proposals from not-for-profits and municipalities in 2021. Existing RTP grant funds and the upcoming grant round are unaffected by the State budget shortfalls. Contact Thomas with questions.

OPRHP Planning Bureau: Chris Morris

- Statewide Greenway Trails Plan: Draft plan is pending release end of November. Public comment period and public hearing will follow. I encourage all Trails Council reps to review the plan, the maps/data, and submit comments.
- Statewide Historic Preservation Plan: Planning process underway with Core Team participants. Draft expected in 2021.
- James Baird Master Plan: Core Team meetings underway to outline the effort. Scoping document and Public Information meeting to follow later in 2020 or early 2021.
- Allegany Quaker Multi-use Path Phase II: Project design underway. Public Information meeting to be held later in November.

- OPRHP held ribbon cuttings to celebrate the opening of both the Minnewaska Visitor Center & Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center recently.
 - OPRHP launched the State Parks Explorer Mobile App over the summer. Interesting technology for patrons who are planning a visit to our facilities. Download through Apple/Android store and take a look.
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NYS DEC, Lands and Forests

McCrea Burnham

Here is a list of Unit Management Plans that the Department is currently working on.

- State Forests UMPs
 - o Region 4 Upcoming- Catskill Creek, Mt. Pisquah
 - o Region 6- Upcoming- Fish Creek State Forests,
 - o Region 7 Upcoming-Broome, Pharsalia Woods, and 5 Streams
 - o In the Pipeline- Taconic Highlands, 46 Corners, Neversink, St. Lawrence Rock Ridge, and Charleston
- Forest Preserve UMPs
 - o Upcoming- Debar Mtn Wild Forest, Chazy Highlands, Wilcox Lake Wild Forest, Lake George Wild Forest and Shandaken Wild Forest

Delegate Report Q&A & New Business:

Carol Schmelz asked for clarification on court case regarding tree cutting on DEC lands. McCrea provided clarification that the case only applies to Forest Preserve lands. Hazard trees can be cut and the state has been proceeding with very low volumes of tree cutting is slowed in intensive use areas. DEC is following Appellate Court's decision until further notice.

Quinn Wright asked for clarification on tree cutting for chainsaw training. McCrea stated that chainsaw courses take place on State Forest lands and are not covered by the court ruling.

Carol S asked for clarification on Boreas Pond bridge project. Dominic Jacangelo noted that that project is still held up by tree cutting ruling.

Dominic provided more details about the DEC's proposed extended deer hunting season in the Southern Zone.

Ivan V. provided some updates on the NY Motor Vehicle Law and changes to include electric bicycles in New York. Noted that the Empire State Trail progress is moving along toward 2020 completion. Noted increased bicycle use due to COVID-19.

Harvey Botzman noted that US Bike Rt11 (NY Bike Rt14) is seeking approval through AASHTO, NY, & PA.

Samantha L. noted COVID and Trail Maintenance as a topic of discussion for next meeting. Delegates shared their experiences and guidance they have been following. A suggestion was made to circulate any guidance via email as well.

Jeff Binga provided information about a new electric Snowmobile and OHVs. HE also noted Allegany County is seeking volunteers in western NY for a regional/county trails council.

Dan Gruen inquired about the status of the Adirondack Rail Trail. McCrea provided updates that the UMP was adopted, and that rail removal is pending. Asked if horses will be included as an allowed use on the trail. Dominic J noted that, to his knowledge, horses were not added as an allowed use.

Carol S mentioned potential topics for future meeting discussion:

- ADK High Peaks overuse/general overuse across the state.
- Legislative action and priorities for Council

Next meeting: April 10, 2021, 10:30 AM In-person or virtual meeting TBD.

Adjournment: Motion: Jeff Binga Second: Dominic Jacangelo