



**Presentation:** Mark Linehan, Yorktown Trail Town Committee (YTT)

The concept of trail towns involves advocating for trails as a means of economic development. YTT had 18 members, including local businessmen, members of the town council and environmentalists. Trail users on the North County Trailway spend an average of \$11 on food, \$389 on equipment; 64% bike, 46% hike, 11% walk dogs, 9% bird (OPRHP 2010 study, *Every Mile Counts: An Analysis of the 2008 Trail User Surveys*). YTT's goals are to develop a map of the businesses adjacent to the North County Trailway, produce and distribute brochures, create maps for town parks that direct visitors to local businesses, and install other directional signs. Mark showed delegates the attractive map brochure the group produced. YTT also advocates for trail extensions and public bathrooms and water supply at nearby Railroad Park.

**Succession Planning:** Jane Daniels initiated a discussion on organizational planning for succession of officers. She offered advice based on her experience with the American Hiking Society and asked for comments from the delegates. Among the comments:

An organization needs job descriptions for each position.

Prospective board members need mentoring.

How many organizations have term limits? (The majority present said they do not.) Terms limits are essential, providing opportunities for members to move up and be more engaged.

Dominic Jacangelo opined that Treasurer is the hardest board job. His organization has budget and committees; treasurers can rise from those ranks.

Anne O'Dell keeps a "what if I'm hit by a bus" envelope under her computer with essential information (passwords, etc.).

Denis Livsey asked, as a relatively new delegate, for more information on the function and goals of the NYSTC. Jane Daniels characterized the group essentially as an advisory board for OPRHP and DEC.

Quinn Wright commented on the difficulties his organization encountered with officers and staff leaving.

Jane will be following up with a simple succession plan and job description for delegates.

**Snowmobiling:** Chris Fallon (OPRHP) shared statistics on snowmobiling: 121, 939 registrations, a 4% increase over the previous year. The season report is posted on the OPRHP website. A new trail map is in the works and should be available this winter.

**Delegate Reports and Concerns:**

Dominic Jacangelo reported on a successful International Snowmobile Conference at Niagara Falls, hosted by the NYS Snowmobile Association. Michael Vitti sent representatives and information on fat-tire bikes to the conference to address perceived conflicts. Dominic said the effort was helpful. He also discussed an upcoming multi-use, community-connector trail in the Newcomb-Minerva-Indian Lake area in the Adirondacks and the Essex Chain Lakes Recreation Plan. DEC and OPRHP is working on a proposal to pull up rails between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid which will become a multi-use trail.

Dan Gruen discussed issues with equestrian trails. Caumsett S.P. (L.I.) is trying to ban horses from the beach. Clay Pits Pond S.P. (Staten Island) has some horses-only trails, which may be opened to other uses. He has no objection as long as horses do not lose access. Part of the Canal Trail corridor between Syracuse and Rome has been paved and may violate SEQRA provisions. Equestrians do not want paved

trails. A Central Park equestrian path may be opened to runners; again, keeping horse access is a concern. The Brookfield Trail system needs considerable maintenance work; DEC has little staff on site. Todd Syska suggested a letter of support from NYSTC. Dan will write a draft and pass it to Jane Daniels for distribution to the delegates prior to finalizing. NYS Horse Council is still trying to have inherent-risk legislation for horse riding passed in the state.

Denis Livsey mentioned excellent camping at John Dillon Park, a 100% accessible facility in Long Lake NY. The park is managed by Paul Smith's college..

Mike Vitti and CLIMB are hosting two mountain bike events on Long Island in October. He is also involved with planning for trails in Sterling Forest. Implementation of the Bethpage State Park Master Plan continues, with marked trails and some closures of spider trails.

Samantha Langton expressed concerns about the relative lack of development of bike trails in New York State. She reported on conflicts and complaints on trails in the Mid-Hudson region despite adequate safety signage on the trails. Fats in the Cats is contemplating running programs to attract more youth bikers to trails, but the group needs to seek grants.

Peter Fedorick asked when and how snowshoeing became a unique trail use under NYSTC definition. Anne O'Dell will research the details.

Mark Wehnau reported on a swimming ban for horses in Otter Creek Park. He also commented on the lack of maintenance at Brookfield. A discussion ensued on just who should maintain trails—volunteer maintainers versus agency personnel. Anne O'Dell commented that there aren't a lot of bodies near Brookfield, and DEC has cut personnel.

Carol Schmelz commented on rumors that equestrians may be shut out of two longtime riding areas, Carleton Hill and Rattlesnake Wildlife Management Areas. McCreia Burnham said the state is simply reviewing procedures and that no such decision has been made. Carol said some people have complained about dogs off leash at Darien Lake S.P.

Quinn Wright said Finger Lakes Trails secured a state grant to develop a better website presence. The results have been positive.

Tom Casey reported on the creation of water trails in Great South Bay in the Town of Babylon and Hempstead Bay north of Jones Beach. Public access to the water is still an issue on Long Island. He said the Southern Pine Beetle is causing severe damage in Suffolk County and may cause temporary trail closures because of hazardous conditions. He mentioned that DEC is considering a timber sale, allowing private companies to harvest oaks in return for cutting the pines. He is concerned about opening up accesses for illegal uses.

Jane Daniels said Breakneck Ridge is badly overused. The Kaaterskill Falls trail is closed for safety reasons, but people continue to ignore the closure signs. Four towns on the west side of Harriman Park are encouraging people to hike another example of the economic implications of outdoor recreation.

Ivan Vamos is still working on moving Complete Streets forward. The rate of pedestrian/bike accidents in this area is much higher than in places that have more accommodations for such users.

### **Agency Reports:**

**OPRHP:** Chris Morris reviewed upcoming Master Plan work, as noted on a handout chart. The North Country National Scenic Trail statewide agreement is approaching final review and signing. An update report to The Statewide Trails Plan should be completed in December. This August, a Trail User Survey and Count were also performed by volunteers at 15 multi-use trails across the state.

Lauren Ellmers discussed RTP grant applications from the latest round. 1.4 million dollars available for 2015. Sixty-one applications are eligible. RTP funds can be used for construction and maintenance projects on trails (culverts, drainage, etc.).

**DEC:** McCrae Burnham said the trail construction manual is being edited. DEC is considering opening Fraser State Forest to ATV use.

**DOT:** Tom Benware said the pedestrian and bicycle program has been reorganized and is now located in the Office of Traffic Safety and Mobility, with focus on pedestrian safety, particularly at intersections.

**Parks and Trails New York:** James Meerdink discussed a grant program for state parks friends groups. Applications are due this quarter. Direct questions to Jackie Gonzalez at 518-434-1583. Over 600 riders did the Erie Canal tour this year. For the first time, a shuttle took some riders back to Buffalo. Information is also available on the PTNY website. PTNY also conducted trail counts in various locations and an ecotourism conference. PTNY continues its Close the Gap campaign for the Canalway.

**Other Discussion:**

Jane Daniels announced that National Public Lands Day is the last weekend in September and the Hudson Valley Greenway event is going on now.

Chris Morris said the mileage figure on the reimbursement form should read \$.575 per mile, not \$5.75.

Peter Fedorick said bicyclists must share some of the blame for car-bike accidents when not following rules of the road. Samantha Langton disagreed, and a discussion ensued. Jane Daniels suggested more education is needed. Ivan Vamos will draft a letter on the subject. Mark Linehan said education of young children is essential.

**Old Business:** Anne O'Dell said ATV riders now have a venue to ride in Lewis County. Todd Syska said all the "trails" are on roads. Anne also said ATVs and off-road motorbikes had an event in Hancock, NY on roads and private land that attracted a large crowd.

Motion to Adjourn: Anne O'Dell

Second: Samantha Langton