

NEW YORK STATE TRAILS COUNCIL MEETING
Saratoga Spa State Park
Administration Building, Gideon Putnam Room
March 22, 2014 10:30 AM - 3:00 PM
DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order

Introductions

Correction/Approval of Minutes - September 21, 2013 Meeting

Motion to accept as is: Mike Vitti Second: Katie Henrikson

Attendance:

4- Wheel Drive – All-Terrain vehicles – Equestrian – Mark Wehnau, Carol Schmelz Hiking- Wes Lampman, Dick Hubbard, Jane Daniels Nordic Skiing – Jim Underwood, Tony Goodwin Off-Highway Motorcycles - Off road Bicycling – Michael Vitti, Craig Fury On Road Bicycling – Ivan Vamos Snowmobiles – Dominic Jacangelo, Anne O'Dell Snowshoeing – Peter Fedorick, Katie Henrikson Water Trails- Tom Casey, Mike Prescott	FHWA – National Park Service – HRV Greenway – Elizabeth Campochiaro Canal Corp. – NYSDEC – S. McCrea Burnham, Amber Merrell (presenter) NYSOPRHP – Nancy Stoner, Steve Lewis NYSDOH – PTNY – James Meerdink NYSDOT - Mary Anne Mariotti (presenter) Visitor: Bob Reinhardt (OPRHP, retired)
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Jane Daniels noted that the State Senate had voted to remove \$90 million for capital improvements for State Parks from its new budget proposal. The Governor's and the State Assembly's proposed budgets included the \$90 million. User group members should all write to their Senators to urge restoration of these funds. See the PTNY website for more information. <http://www.ptny.org/index.shtml>

Update: the funds were restored and are included in the State's FY2014-15 Budget.

Presentation: Invasive Species and the NYS Trails System - Amber Merrell, Outreach Coordinator, NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests

- Invasive species defined as non-native species that cause harm to ecosystem; most now are from Asia
- Species profiles
 - Emerald Ash Borer - Much of the southern half of NYS is now a quarantine zone.
 - Giant Hogweed - causes severe phytophotodermatitis
- Pathways - Invasives are often transported on or in firewood. Invasives hitchhike on cars, bicycles, shoes, boats, infested nursery stock, soil or mulch
- Impacts - deforestation, loss of canopy and consequent flourishing of understory invasives; erosion (e.g., hemlocks near streams succumbing to wooly adelgid) and siltation; trees falling on property and people; physical effects (rashes, etc.); increased need for maintenance; decreased aesthetic appeal and visitation
- Action - Awareness events, distribution of informational materials; cleaning stations; volunteer surveys and pulls
- July 6-12th is a Statewide Invasive Species Week

- **Invasive Species Resource Organizations:** NYSDEC, OPRHP, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, PRISM (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management) (http://www.nyis.info/?action=prism_main), The Nature Conservancy

Proposed changes in by-laws:

Jane Daniels reviewed the suggestions for discussion.

- Notices regarding meeting attendance will be sent via mail or e-mail.
- Any representative who fails to attend three consecutive meetings, without notification in writing, is automatically dropped and the group may find another representative.
- Minor wording change in Article III, Sec. 1
- Officers shall be elected for terms of two years; elections to be held in even-numbered years
- The Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three members at the fall meeting preceding the meeting at which elections are to be held.
- Any delegate may nominate candidates either by mail or e-mail to the Nominating Committee or OPRHP Trails Administrator 45 days in advance or from the floor at the meeting.

Jane Daniels discussed a proposal from the By-law Committee to add at-large members from the various geographical regions of the state. The consensus was that we all represent multiple interests anyway, and that too many additions might prove unwieldy.

Anne O’Dell suggested adding a “multi-use” user group. Consensus was that each existing delegate likely is a multi-use trail user (enjoys multiple recreational trail uses) and that would suffice.

Jim Underwood suggested we have legislative staffers attend. Dominic Jacangelo suggested that we notify legislators and committees of our meetings and invite attendance. Steve Lewis said such invitations should automatically be part of any meeting notices. Nancy Stoner will follow up with state government to identify appropriate legislative committees and contacts to add to the distribution list.

McCrea Burnham suggested we have a delegate representing universal-access interests. Beth Campochiaro observed that access issues cover a broad spectrum of needs.

Motion to include universal access/persons with disabilities/impaired as a user group: Anne O’Dell

Second: Mike Prescott Motion approved unanimously

Motion to include the addition of the new user group to the by-laws: Anne O’Dell

Second: Mike Prescott Motion approved unanimously

Motion to vote on changes to the by-laws, as amended, at the next meeting: Ivan Vamos

Second: Dominic Jacangelo Motion approved unanimously

Presentation: Mary Anne Mariotti, Acting Director of the NYSDOT Local Programs Bureau, made a presentation on the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

- The state receives funds from the Federal Government (\$50 million over two years under MAP-21 legislation).
- All TAP funds are 80% Federal, 20% minimum local match.
- TAP guidebook is available at NYSDOT website, www.dot.ny.gov/tap.
- Local governments, planning boards and other public agencies can sponsor projects; school districts and non-profits cannot.

- Projects must relate to surface transportation, land or water, but not recreation, though recreation can be a component of the proposal.
- Must be completed and have final construction inspection accepted within five years.
- Mary Anne reviewed specifics of the program requirements. See guidebook.
- Pre-review deadline is May 7; application deadline June 11. A handout provided more details.

Dominic Jacangelo observed that there is a huge disconnect between Complete Streets and the Comptroller's Office. If highway crews are used to build sidewalks, the Comptroller doesn't consider sidewalks highways, creating problems with reimbursement.

It was also observed that TAP requires a maintenance plan (including snow and ice removal). This doesn't accommodate those trails that are used with winter uses (ie. bike paths used as cross-country ski trails in the winter).

Implementation of Statewide Trails Plan:

Nancy Stoner mentioned that a listing of websites with trails inventories and maps is now available at: <http://nysparks.com/recreation/trails/trails-in-new-york.aspx>

Jane Daniels asked members if any had implemented any part of the Volunteer Recognition material we created in past meetings. Several members offered comments.

Nancy said she had not had time to work on Statewide Trails Webinars. She mentioned that OPRHP is developing a Trails Planning Resource list which she is currently reviewing.

OPRHP may again conduct a State Trail User Count in August 2014. Members discussed various methodologies of counting, differences in seasonal use, experiences in conducting counts and other issues (ie. trail registers, partnering with university programs, DEC working with ESF students, trail stewards conducting counts, CDTC has done trail counts on select bike trails, DOT counters (unreliable?), trailhead registers (not everyone uses them?), infrared trail counters (wildlife, children playing), funding, reliability, methodologies, etc). Nancy asked if the Trails Council would support this year's count and received an affirmative reply. Anne O'Dell urged that a count also be conducted in the winter. Nancy will research for an appropriate methodology.

OPRHP will be working on an update report of the 2010 Statewide Trails Plan for 2015.

Delegate Reports and Concerns:

- Carol Schmelz discussed the problem of people wearing headphones on trails, posing a safety hazard. Nancy Stoner replied that this might be an issue for part of a public awareness campaign.
- Mike Prescott added that the state needs to be pushing trail ethics in general.
- Mike Vitti discussed their Trail That Teaches – an interpretive trail that teaches about trail etiquette and more.
- Dick Hubbard discussed the loss of trails on private land because of rudeness from users.
- Jane Daniels asked if we should have a committee to compile suggestions on trail ethics. Mike Prescott, Tom Casey and Carol Schmelz volunteered. From there we will try to push state land-managing agencies to place more emphasis on ethics and responsibility. Forward trail ethics resources to Mike at: mpresco1@nycap.rr.com

- Mark Wehnau raised concerns about the spread of Lyme disease. Is there anything the state can do to increase awareness?
- Carol Schmelz mentioned a group that wants to purchase an Italian snow car for trail grooming; if DEC buys it, could it be used on other parklands? Permission for use of motorized equipment must be given by the Public Agency managing the land in question. Nancy confirmed that generally any type of trail maintenance equipment is eligible under RTP (not just groomers). Carol discussed a large horse event in her area and invasive species in local waterways and parks. If someone has taken a DEC chain saw class, is there some way that can be made to apply to other park agencies, so that a person doesn't have to take yet another course? DEC and OPRHP will double check agency requirements including the potential for regional differences.
- Mike Vitti asked if there is some resource for certifying chain saw and first aid instructors. Jane Daniels said NY-NJTC knows of one person and also they have used Wilderness Training; other delegates offered suggestions, such as the Empire State Forest Products Association. <http://www.esfpa.org/home.aspx>. This website lists Game of Logging (GOL) Trainings across the state.
- Mike reported that the Jones Beach bike path extension project has been completed, allowing riders to actually reach the beach. The path is being extended 4-1/2 miles east to Tobay Beach. Several organizations are planning a Northeast Mountain Biking Summit on Cape Cod, April 4. Bethpage and Trail View State Parks Trails Plan meeting will occur next week. He also has a meeting at Sterling Forest State Park with NYNJTC and the park manager to discuss implementing projects for multi-use trails identified in the Trails Plan.
- Dick Hubbard reported on taking DEC representatives on a hike on the Finger Lakes Trail. There will be a FLTC and ADK combined event in Cazenovia College on the last weekend of May. His group has been working on easements and has had donations of land for trails. They have been able to move 17 miles of FLT onto NYC DEP lands in the Catskills. He reported on trail work and reroutes in his area. He also discussed advances on the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT), with an event scheduled for Sept. 27. The NCT will likely be extended across the Vermont border to connect to the Long Path. Note: DEC is close to releasing the NCT route plan through the Adirondacks for public review and comments. Dick urged delegates to attend local events and Chamber of Commerce functions to network with locals about trails.
- Anne O'Dell said the New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA) had Governor Cuomo and the Commissioner of Parks out on snowmobiles to urge him to remove the rails from the Adirondack Rail corridor. Her organization will offer a chain saw certification and CPR/blood born pathogen classes on April 25-27 during the NYSSA Forum. NYSSA will be hosting the International Forum in June 2015.
- Dominic Jacangelo discussed "newbie" snowmobilers found in dangerous circumstances.
- Jane Daniels said Breakneck Ridge is probably the most popular trail in the state. A trail steward program will occur again this summer. Sales of a map will also be used to track usage. The Westchester Trail Committee of the NY-NJ Trail Conference held a Partners Breakfast for

municipalities, parks, NFPs and other trail partners/land managers that was put on by volunteers. It was a great networking opportunity (with food!) and was such a success that it will be an annual event from now on. Jane will conduct a workshop March 29 in Mahwah, NJ on Volunteer Supervisor Training – recruiting, budget planning, project planning and more.

- Craig Fury said the Bluestone State Forest UMP calls for 2.5 miles of new off-road bike track, and he is eager to get to work on it. He also mentioned controversy over use of a rail corridor in the Catskills (Catskill Mountain Rail Trail proposal in Ulster County).
- Tom Casey reported that for the first time in six years, Long Island has a DEC State Forester, John Wernet. He will be doing a forest inventory and mark the boundaries of DEC lands on Long Island. The day after this meeting, Tom will lead a hike on the proposed new Ray Corwin Trail, approximately 7 miles; it connects with the Paumanok Path, forming a north-south, 12-mile route, with an extension another five miles to the south shore possible. A parallel equestrian trail is a work in progress.
- Carol Schmelz asked how NYSTC letters supporting counties that have adopted trails plans will be disseminated. Copies should be sent to every legislator and press releases sent out.

OPRHP:

- Nancy Stoner gave an RTP update on \$3.1 million in local projects and \$1.9 million in state projects. She is working with NYSDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on some new project review procedures, and this is delaying the authorization of projects.
- The update and timelines for master plans and other Parks plans was handed out. The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is complete and to be published on March 26, 2014.
- OPRHP is finalizing a statewide agreement for the Appalachian Trail with a multitude of agencies and are working on a statewide agreement for the North Country Trail.
- She discussed the Backcountry Trails Program where OPRHP has entered into a contract with NY-NJTC for conducting trails trainings for volunteers using NYNJTC's Trail University Model. Volunteers are trained in basic to advanced skills for developing and maintaining trails and are engaged in projects that implement parks' Trails Plans. The vast majority of OPRHP's backcountry trails are located in the Taconic and Palisades Regions and at Allegany S.P.
- The Coalition for Recreational Trails' due date for awards nominations is this coming Friday.
- Joseph Davis SP – In 2011, the Town of Lewiston took over operation and maintenance of the park through an Agreement with OPRHP. In 2013, a more extensive agreement had been negotiated with the Town to allow them to amend the master plan and proceed with capital improvements, but the agreement was not signed. The new Town administration is considering their financial situation. The 2011 Agreement is still in place.

DEC:

- McCrea Burnham mentioned the 50 Hunting and Fishing Access Projects Governor Cuomo announced, as outlined in his handout.
- The notification policy for how people learn of road closures will be modified.
- The updated Unit Management Plans Reports for the Adirondacks and the Catskills were passed out.

Hudson River Valley Greenway:

- Beth Campochiaro reported that the Hudson River Ramble will be in September. See www.hudsonrivervalleyramble.com.

Parks and Trails NY:

- James Meerdink said I Love My Parks Day is May 3 this year.
- April 25-27 will be the 9th annual Canal Clean Sweep cleanup event. PTNY hopes to have 3,000 or more volunteers.
- He mentioned an adverse Supreme Court decision on rail trails, which does not affect rail trails in New York.
- February 11 was Active Transportation Advocacy Day. He also discussed Parks Advocacy Day. Ivan Vamos noted that the February 11 event did not yield the hoped-for funding, but it did result in the release of previously-budgeted money. PTNY is starting to plan a 'Trails and Closing the Gaps' Advocacy Day for late April.

Next Meeting Presentation: Jane Daniels asked if delegates want to do marketing and social media as a presentation for the next meeting. The consensus was yes. She also urged members who drive a distance to carpool and save the state some travel money.

Next meeting: Saturday, Sept. 20, 2014, 10:30 AM at Saratoga Spa State Park

Adjourned: 2:51 pm.

Action Items:

- Delegates to share Invasive Species information and resource organizations with contacts as appropriate.
- Delegates will forward trail ethics resources to Mike Prescott at: mpresco1@nycap.rr.com
- The Volunteer recognition table will again be emailed out to the Council for distribution, and Nancy will add it to the OPRHP Trails website.
- Jane and Nancy will coordinate By-Laws updates and Nancy will email out prior to next meeting when vote will take place.
- Nancy will continue to review Trails Planning Resource list and send out to Council for comments.
- Jane and Carol will coordinate on the letter to go out to Counties that have adopted trails plans and letters to legislators.
- Nancy will research for an appropriate method for a winter trail use count.
- DEC and OPRHP will double check agency requirements for chainsaw training.
- Nancy will identify Legislative Committees and contacts related to trails to add to Council's distribution list and for invitation to meetings.