

**NEW YORK STATE TRAILS COUNCIL
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
SARATOGA SPRINGS STATE PARK
FEBRUARY 10, 2007**

Attendance:

Delegates: Bob Bryant (Snowmobiles), Tom Casey (Water Trails), Sara Chevako (Equestrian), Gary Haugland (Hiking), Len Howard (Off-Highway Motorcycles), Dan McLaughlin (Water Trails), Anne Odell (Chair, Snowmobiles), Mike Prescott (Water Trails), Ben Rush (Off-Highway Motorcycles), Todd Syska (4WD), Irene Szabo (Hiking), Jim Underwood (Nordic Skiing), Ivan Vamos (Bicycling), Michael Vitti (Bicycling), Mark Wehnau (Equestrian), Katherine Wolfe (Snowshoeing),

Guests: Neil Zimmerman

Agency Representatives: Bob Reinhardt (OPRHP), Elaine Troy (DOH), Tom Wolfe (DEC),

Organization Representatives: Fran Gotcsik (PTNY), Marisa Tedesco (ADK),

Absent: Steven Kearney (4WD), Bob Blair (4WD), Alex Ernst (ATV), Chris Murray (Bicycling), Steve Samuell (Bicycling), Carol Schmelz (Equestrian), Wes Lampman (Hiking), Ron Farra (Nordic Skiing), Tony Goodwin (Nordic Skiing), Ken Irwin (Off-Highway Motorcycles), Laura Clark (Running), Jim Jennings (Snowmobile), Scott Keller (Water Trails)

Excused:

Agencies not represented: NPS, FHWA, State Assembly, Canal Corp

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting called to order at 11:22 AM, followed by roll call. A quorum was determined.
2. **Correction/Approval of Minutes** - Approved, except that Irene would like to amend her own minutes by referring to the email she sent subsequent to our September meeting, informing delegates about the training program Parks and Trails NY has instituted to create a cadre of certified trail assessors, who can be called upon to help any trail in New York which has a requirement to provide standardized Universal Trail Assessment descriptions.
3. **Certification of New Delegates** – Dan McLaughlin for Gail Cashen
4. **Delegate Reports & Concerns** –
 - a. Raquette River Corridor Project (Mike Prescott) - PowerPoint showing appealing

pictures from different portions of the river trail, placid reservoirs to some white water. The carries are well-marked trails, with put-ins at every dam, thanks to Brookfield Power. There were actually nineteenth century concepts to send the Raquette River away from the St. Lawrence and feed to the Hudson River via canals, but that was defeated several times. Currently there are 20 hydro plants with 29 carries which provide places to stay; campsites plus villages, and motels on Route 56. Their website informs of such.

- b. ADK will be working on a number of different types of trails in the Lake Placid area on National Trails Day, in addition to activities on the Raquette River.
 - c. Anne O'Dell - invites another presentation next time to present about their trail. Cross-country and snowshoe presentation next time: Katherine Wolfe and Jim Underwood volunteered.
5. **Agency Reports -**
- a. OPRHP – Bob Reinhardt
Carol Ash, new Commissioner Nominee: identified four initiatives including rehabilitation of the park system, stewardship of resources, connectivity among parks through both trails and natural areas, and a green initiative. Andy Beers from The Nature Conservancy is now the first deputy commissioner. She wants to add 52 positions in Parks, protecting resources will be the big focus. Positive reaction from Bob, who said she is a comfortable person to talk to, “Carol” not “Commissioner.” He said she is aware of the Trails Council, so we should invite her to a meeting. .
[ACTION ITEM: Motion to invite her to spring meeting by Mark, second by Bob Bryant, agreed.]

Open Space and Adirondack Snowmobile Plans are done and published. Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants announced in December by outgoing administration, although usually announced in June for NTD. An application list identifying the applications that received funding and those that did not was distributed. Bob is trying to get grant list information back onto website, because right now all previous administration’s press releases were expunged.

Fran asks on behalf of those who did not get grants if they can learn why not? Bob says regional grants reps will go over application results with them for a learning experience.

Appalachian Trail relocation on Bear Mt - NYNJ Trail Conference is progressing under the guidance of Eddie Walsh. A power point presentation from the NYNJ Trail Conference of the incredible rock moving, splitting, use of cables, grip-hoist, and lots of technical skill needed to make permanent trail along a steep place that has such heavy usage. Crush rock above site chuted down to site to “pave” tread. Even an accessible trail from road at top, approximately a mile including overview of Hudson is being planned. Training component of project designed to create cadre of experienced volunteers. Also restoring existing closed trail to look natural plus keep

people off the rest of the hillside, and on the new trail is part of the project.
Partnership among three agencies and NYNJTC.

Sterling Forest trail plan still underway; Sterling Forge recently acquired for another 500 acres filling in part of “donut hole” in the middle.

Trail View State Park - DOT working on bike path connecting several Long Island parks, connecting to train station for commuters. Getting close for routes, plans, connections. ‘08 construction, plus another bike trail along Ocean Parkway from Jones Beach to Captree State Park. Also ‘08 will be able to bike to beach.

Statewide trails plan: surveys are done. The next step is to have the Council assist in identifying strategies for the various issues along with defining the issues. The delegates were provided worksheets to send back to Parks. The draft outline of the plan was also handed out. It was noted that liability was low on the list. However, the issues will likely emerge again. Instructions were provided for completing the work sheet. Electronic files will be e-mailed to all the delegates. This is a good opportunity for the delegates to provide input into the process.

Len says he feels SCORP never reveals the need for motorized trails, so he wonders how many respondents to current survey of issues came from motorized users. Because there aren’t trail groups for them, Len wonders, is there another way to reach out to those users who wish they had any trail. Anne suggests that ways to reach out to ATV and off-road motorcycle user group is hard, since they have no effective group or voice, so perhaps a random sampling of surveys using registration addresses for ATVs could be utilized... Len asks that something be done to capture motorized users’ needs by Parks before they finish process. Bob will discuss possible ways to better address ATV needs with the research staff

The goals is to finish both SCORP and trails plan this year.

[ACTION ITEM: Response deadline 3 weeks which is March 3rd.] Repeated comments that park professional comments will be missing usages which are not allowed in their parks!

Bob handed out blank mileage reimbursement forms. Optional to use.

- b. DEC - Tom Wolfe on new commissioner, Alexander “Pete” Grannis, Assemblyman from Manhattan, not acting until confirmed. So no appointments in upper echelons yet, so DEC still coasting. Governor’s budget for stewardship looks good, significant increase in EPF, acquisition. Staffing: 109 new positions, including 12 person global warming unit. However, there are no new planners or managers for state lands. Regional directors are appointed positions that will likely be reviewed. Twelve years ago every prior appointee were dismissed, but he hopes this won’t happen again, since some talented directors would thus be

lost.

Tom hopes to report on what global warming unit is planning to do, and maybe then we'll ask for a future speaker from there.

Regulations/land use: hand out of proposed changes, seeks our comments within 2 weeks. Again, clarifying these regs will help them get local Justice of the Peace to convict, not dismiss ECO's tickets. Fran brought up the Genesee Valley Greenway, which has long been an enforcement in no man's land, so Tom invites us to recommend that greenways be added so that they don't fall through the cracks of enforcement.

Debate about positive vs. negative signing and how that latter spirit is now informing this new set of regs. Tom stresses that there are reserved rights in many conservation easements, so these regs do not necessarily block CE grantors from their own reserved usages. Ranger cannot write ticket based on UMP rules, but only on basis of these regs.

After this, there will be public comment after informal review by typical affected parties. Then will be formal comment period. Geocaching came up, so comment was invited. DEC has no policy against geocaching, doesn't want to. When regulations revision to be completed? Before Tom retires, and he's in a hurry, so by end of 2007!!

[ACTION ITEM: Respond before Feb 28th with suggestions.]

Other updates: ATV policy - not passed, new administration wants to have input before it goes out.

Region 7 Draft Recreation Plan – There will be an education process with the new administration to determine future actions. DEC still wants Rec Plan to apply to all State lands, not just Region 7.

Zoar Valley UMP was approved: recommends gorge and 300 ft buffer designated state natural and historic preserve.

Erwin - UMP draft ready but waiting for spring in hopes of more people at public meetings, probably May or June.

Tioga and Broome UMPs were finalized. (Unit Management Plan)

Oil & gas leases: contracts to bidders still under review. Region 7 experienced lots of interest by "prospectors" but still on hold.

Brasher State Forest UMP includes ATV trails: still draft stage, with plan to make

it both UMP and Environmental Impact Statement at the same time.

Region 3 - Stewart SF UMP approved, includes snowmobiling. High plant diversity, but a jungle of invasive species.

Catskill state land plan still awaiting review by new administration.

Conservation easements: draft rec plan ready for E. Branch Fish Creek but next will be public meetings. Near closing International Paper easements in Adirondacks but IP sold to a Timber Investment Management Organization (TIMO) Lime Lumber, so needs to be reviewed again.

6. **Old Business** - Ivan - conference about creating walkable communities 17-18 April, Corning.

Mark -- any update on Minnewaska horse fee issue from last meeting? Potential for daily permit instead of annual, should be news by spring. No park manager right now.

7. **New Business** - Fran - Parks and Trails NY cross-state canalway trail bike ride, July, and Hudson valley ride, August; brochures. Statewide trails and greenways conference in Rochester, Sept 28-29, includes big awards presentations; handed out categories for nominations, asked for topic suggestions for Sept. conference. Draft study of road/trail intersection safety. On website. 5 new communities coming up for their Healthy Trails/Healthy People program assistance. PTNY is organizing a statewide trails coalition and a letter inviting many organizations has gone out.

Elaine Troy: draft greenways concept for Capital district, presented to four counties, aiming for acceptance by regional transportation planners.

Dan McLaughlin for Gail Cashen who is retiring. Their organization is trying to establish water trail from NYC to Canada. aiming to establish put-ins and connections to parallel trails every 8-10 miles, halfway there. (Proposed Dan as new delegate to replace Gail. Accepted.)

Sara: NY Horse Council wanted us to note that the Connecticut Dept of Env Protection wants to restrict use of horses on their trails. Survey as to value of equine sector in NY conducted by Ag & Markets (state agency) shows value and numbers have risen a lot.

Bob Bryant, NYSSA (snowmobiles) - went to a conference where private lands and trail permissions were discussed.

Fran on state budget: encourages individuals to advocate for budget now before state due to increased parks, land acquisition, EPF funding. She will even give people

advice as to points to cover. March 6th tentatively scheduled for the budget hearing. So there is time for written comments, and Fran has info on how to do what at PTNY office. Multiple copies required!!

Anne has heard that due to California pipe bomber there will now be more patrols on DEP water authority property. NYSSA has program "trail watch," signing up people to watch for security problems, so Anne is going to ask if NYSSA can patrol aqueducts on snowmobile. Neil and Gary indicated that no travel is allowed on aqueducts, so maybe Anne's idea is stillborn, Ivan says 9/11 really interrupted DEP's barest beginnings of relaxation.

8. **Next meetings** - June 23 and Sept 15, 2007
9. **Adjourn** - Meeting closed at 4 PM

[note! we forgot to elect officers.]