



NHHC 2016 Trails Report

State, Regional, Seminars, Committee Mtgs, Publications

STATE

Statewide Trails Advisory Committee: NHHC has the equine representative appointed seat on the committee. All three meetings were attended by NHHC: January 13, May 18 and October 19, 2016. Meeting minutes can be found on <http://www.nhstateparks.org/get-involved/commissions-committees/statewide-trails-advisory-committee.aspx>. These meetings can be attended as equine trail user guests and NHHC hopes to see you there.

SB80 - Study Committee for recreation uses on abandon rail corridors.

Committee members were Senator Nancy Stiles, Representative Brian Chirichiello, Representative George Sykes. NHHC-TC attended the two meetings held this year on September 27 and October 18 as a continuation of last year's meetings. Members of the Committee asked that stakeholders come prepared with suggestions to be made for updates to the most recent 1997 New Hampshire's State Trail Plan and for future legislation that may be drafted in this area.

NHHC-TC submitted as testimony our suggestions for the 1997 NH State Trail Plan to support a third unpaved path of a targeted width of 5ft if a rail corridor is paved and to clarify the guidelines for multi-use rail corridor trails. Ped/bike trails should be discussed separate from recreational multi-use trails that have more than these two uses.

NHHC-TC testimony supported unpaved corridors especially through or near commercial, residential and agricultural zoned areas where horse keeping is allowed; Cost of trail development and maintenance should not eliminate the need to accommodate equine use; That equine use has a history of being an allowed non-motorized user on almost all rail corridors; Limiting or removing equine use should not happen because of bad trail design and/or when areas are being paved; Parking facility designs need to consider parking for equine trailers and be shown on maps; Traffic signals at trail road crossings need a 2nd manual button that is higher for equestrians to activate.

The Committee's Report was final in November and supports a new updated Trails Plan with DOT and DRED working in cooperation. And DOT/DRED shall consider whether or not the Committee's recommendations need to be included in the State Trails Plan or within the State's Bike and Ped Plan.

The Committee's draft does recommend appropriate trail layout for equestrians, mapping parking including lots for horse trailers, and crossing signals and their buttons to benefit equine use.

Action is needed from the equine community to watch for and participate in commenting and meetings when the State's Trail Plan is updated.

HB1569-DRED volunteer group protection and insurance for trail maintenance.

HB1569 will give DRED the opportunity to purchase general liability insurance for volunteer organizations working on trails on DRED lands, this option comes into play if other options for insurance is not practical and price of insurance is too high or difficult to get. This legislation has no affect on individual volunteers. They are protected under existing statues and the state does not require insurance from them. NHHC sent comments in March in favor of original wording but then many changes were made to this Bill and DRED was not supportive of the changes. In April the Bill was Inexpedient to Legislate-KILLED. In the meantime, DRED found an RSA that allows them to pursue an insurance policy for organizations doing work on DRED lands without more legislation. DRED is still settling some details on the ins and outs of the insurance, but have a basic understanding of the policy. There will be a limited number of organizations on the proposed policy and current groups working with DRED are first ones who are eligible.

SB383 Commission to study and recommend improvements to NH hiking trails network.

NHHC-TC had concerns that the Bill only focused on hiking even though the Study Commission falls under the Chapter 216-F Multi-use Statewide Trail System and that a hiking trail was not defined. What will it's affect be on equine use if it roams into hiking type trails that equestrians are using? The subjects being studied by this commission seem to have the potential to benefit other non-motorized uses along with what it might do for hiking, so needs to be watched closely. For March 30 SB383 public hearing, the NHHC –TC sent testimony to request a clarification of the definition of a hiking trail or modify language towards studying non-motorized trails. June 16 the Bill became affective and NHHC testimony had no effect on the wording of the Bill. The Study Commission's first meeting was 9-21-16. One comment from the Sept. minutes read "moving away from multiuse trails". Second meeting held December 6.

Commission members; Jeb Bradley-Senate, Philip Bryce-DRED, Jack Waldron-Wonalancet Outdoor Club, Bob Drescher-Randolph Mountain Club, Thomas Wagner-White Mt Natl Forest, Tim Symonds-Monadnock/Sunapee Greenway, Chris Christensen-House, Bill Warren-Appalachian Mountain Club, Rory Gawler-Dartmouth Outdoor Program, Raynold Jackson-Trailswrights of NH, Craig Sandborn-Cardigan Highlanders Volunteer Trail Crew.

Watching this commission is needed to monitor whether it will benefit trails that have equine use or not. Report is due November 2017.

DRED

Bear Brook State Park- There is a focus of BBSP being a sample park.

NHHC website posts a color coded map showing the easiest to more difficult trails. In addition, the trail descriptions are also posted to help navigate the Park. Bear Brook State Park has a 1994 Management Plan that is slated to be reviewed and changed within the next two years.

CLH Plan 2017-2022 Plan Proposal

The Equine Pilot program ended Sept 2015 and NHHC kept watch during 2016 for changes of allowed equine use in for the 2017-2022 Plan Proposal. A Public Workshop was held in Pittsburg and Concord in April 2016 to Identify Issues/Recommendations. – No notice of April meetings were sent to NHHC or STAC members so NHHC-TC did not attend these meetings. NHHC-TC sent notice of Plan Proposal to equine community and sent NHHC-TC comments on May 12 supporting continued equine use in the 2017-2022 Plan. NHHC-TC supports: the Cohos Trail Association co-shared non-motorized/equestrian/snowmobile trail proposal to connect Coleman State Park with Cedar Stream Road (7 miles) on the CLH property; Formalizing the trails/parking areas outlined in the 2012 amendment; Final mapping of the equestrian trails. Actions for the new trail include: a non-motorized trail blazing plan for the property to be developed by the Division in cooperation with non-motorized trail users; Providing a GPS or shape file of the Cohos trails on the property to document its location prior to the construction of any new trails. There is hope that local equestrians will volunteer to assist.

NHHC sends notice to equine community about the public outreach sessions for the Draft Plan to be held in Pittsburg Nov. 15 and Concord Nov. 17. Three NHHC-TC members attended the Concord meeting and three/four local equestrians attended the Pittsburg meeting. NHHC asked for equestrian trail maps to be produced and supported the presentation of the 2017-2022 Plan goes to the CLH Citizens Committee on Dec. 10.

The New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation Volunteer Program is supported by the Supervisor of Volunteer Activities. The Supervisor will work with park managers to help them identify projects and develop stewardship opportunities. They will then work to recruit and place volunteers, as well as, track program results of volunteer contribution to the New Hampshire's State Park System. Volunteers play a vital role in enhancing the 92 state park properties, including state parks, beaches, campgrounds, trails, waysides, natural areas, and historic sites. Opportunities are available across the state for a variety of projects and roles.

NHHC-TC is monitoring the progression of the program to identify trail projects.

Volunteer Program Tool Trailer. This mobile unit will be filled with trail maintenance tools that can be used by Volunteers all over the State. It will be particularly beneficial for Volunteer events and to help in response to storm clean ups.

State Park volunteer trail maintenance agreements are available for individuals and groups.

Trail Etiquette:

NHHC-TC designed and/or approved trail etiquette signs for consistency of postings. The approved documents are available and recommended for equine trail users to post where permission has been granted at State managed lands: NHHC Sharing Trails brochure, DRED trail etiquette, DRED etiquette yield sign, NHHC's HAY is for Horses poster, trail descriptions.

Hampton Beach and Trail State Rules (abridged) are posted on NHHC website. Be sure to be kind to any of our ambassadors who kindly remind you of the rules. Let's be proud of our stewardship on the lands we use!

Please spread the word to visit our website for important information.

Seminars, Conferences & Training

The Stewardship Network: This network is important for equestrians to develop a relationship with. WHY? To network with the different land managers, owners and resources. To share our needs and incorporate it into training material. To educate ourselves to become better stewards. To learn good trail design, layout and maintenance to help control trail erosion. (water runoff is #1 problem). To grow a list of educated equine organizations and individuals working as stewards and ambassador for trails in State Parks and Forests, Rail Trails, Conservation lands, and Town lands.

The Network has worked in cooperation with the UNH cooperative extension, NH Division of Forest and Lands, US Department of Agriculture and NH counties, with over 140 citizens and 86 different conservation organizations agencies, and volunteer groups, land trusts and private landowners. Some of the following priorities for the Stewardship Network are:

- Offer training statewide, prioritizing trails, invasives, and land management
- Create opportunities to share expertise, see Southeast Stewardship Hub
- Secure tools & resources to be shared (workday equipment, trails crews, interns, etc.)
- Help with volunteer management

UNH cooperative extension Emily Lord and Lew Shelly of Snowhawk LLC, Trail Design/ Construction/Training held two trail maintenance training sessions. These sessions included Trail terminology, assessing the condition of trails, handling tools, and how to deal with water, slope, grades and recreational users.

NHHC-TC sent notice to the equine community on these two workshops:

Basic Trail Maintenance Workshop Sat. June 11 Amherst NH--3 equestrians attended. Dug channel to get water off the trail.

Basic Trail Maintenance Workshop Sat. OCT.22 Durham NH at UNH,--1 equestrian attended, this session's learning project is about grade dips (erosion control) and spur trail closures for restoration.

At the June workshop The Network announces they are creating a Trail maintenance training guide to be introduced by the end of the year. NHHC writes a letter to Emily asking to include info for multiuse trails. NHHC provided info of trail design parameters for equine use.

At the October workshop The Network distributed The Trail Maintenance for Volunteers guide. NHHC is writing another letter to thank them for including equine use and to clarify and suggest wording for the next revision on specific equine trail design parameters.

Check out the training guides at <http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/training>

Other Training:

ELCR – NHHC shares to the equine community and recommends this free trail webinar Building Partnerships to Support Equine Trail Riding (How to Create & Sustain A Private Trail System) on Nov. 29. Webinars are in partnership with info@myhorseuniversity.com eXtension Horses.

You can view free webcasts at <http://www.myhorseuniversity.com/resources/webcasts>

Creating and Maintaining a Private Trail System
Tips for Staying Safe on the Roads and Trails
On the Trail Ride – Best Practices

NH DRED- NHHC shares to the equine community and recommends this free trail webinar from DRED's Johanna Lyons who sent a notice on the *American Trails presented "Powerful Partnerships: Lessons Learned on Leveraging Public-Private Funding for Trails" on December 8, 2016 as a part of the American Trails "Advancing Trails Webinar Series"*. You can view a FREE archived version of the webinar, by [downloading the recorded session on the American Trails website](http://www.americatrails.org/resources/funding/Webinar-Innovative-Funding-Strategies.html). <http://www.americatrails.org/resources/funding/Webinar-Innovative-Funding-Strategies.html>

Regional

Information supplied by our contacts throughout the year. Please feel welcome to keep in touch.

Pawtuckaway SP—Derry Trail Riders Club helped to fund a Snow Slickers project to replace a bridge on Chase trail.

Bear Brook SP—Derry Trail Riders Club (DTR): hosted a trail care day May22 where 10 volunteers from participated; Mowed Hayes field with a crew of 4 on May27; all of the hours have been captured in the DRED work report submitted to Patrick Hummell; a spring benefit trail ride for this Park in May29; DTR has a State Volunteer group agreement to help maintain Bear Brook trails and Hayes Field.

Pisgah State Park-- Monadnock Happy Trails Association (MHTA) held 2 work days at Pisgah State Park in Winchester, NH. MHTA has a State Volunteer group agreement to help maintain Pisgah Trails. The spring work day cleaned trash up off the parking lot and brushed back the overgrowth of small trees along the parking lot. Five members worked with Ranger Whip Newell. For our fall work day we brushed back the Reservoir trail with Ranger Newell. Again, five members attended. Several members of MHTA have also worked throughout the year when Friends of Pisgah had their monthly work days; all of the hours have been captured in the DRED work report submitted to Patrick Hummel. MHTA members Art and Laura S. attended the Basic Trail Maintenance Workshop June 11 Amherst NH held by the UNH Stewardship Network.

There are several trails Art and Laura ride near home that are on private property that they maintain as well in return for the privilege of riding. Neighbors use the trails for snowmobiling and dog walking, etc.

Northwood Meadows SP- Renee W. an equine member of the Friends of Northwood Meadows requests that NHHC-TC remind horseback riders of DRED rules to clean up manure and hay in the parking area including the grass island. A great deal of effort was put into beautifying and planting a flower garden in the parking area for all users to enjoy, so please avoid disturbing plantings. The Friends have considered posting a sign but they do not want to detract from the organic nature of the spot.

Power Major Farm—NHHC is following the progress of the Forest Society's acquisition of 227 acres for a reservation in Madbury/Durham/Lee. Wentworth Hunt Club has a history of using this land for hunt activities and current owner's favors continued equine use in the easement that is being developed for the acquisition. Conservation agencies and private landowners are important to trail access. This is an example of a good landowner relationship with an equine organization resulting in possible permanent future trail access. A remaining \$346,000 is still needed in private funding to complete the project by the end of the year.

https://www.forestsociety.org/sites/default/files/Goss_Website_0.pdf

<https://www.forestsociety.org/project/conserves-powder-majors-farm-and-forest-seacoast-region>

This property hosts an extensive, 10-mile trail system for horseback riding, hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife watching, hunting, snowmobiling, bike riding and fishing.

At one of the public information sessions to bring awareness of donations needed for the acquisition, The Wentworth Hunt Club had a display promoting their equine use and maintenance of the property.

Branch Hill Farm, Milton Mills & Wakefield NH 3,000 acres Tree and working agriculture Farm. A network of 45 miles of woodland access roads provides fire protection as well as multiple recreational opportunities to the public. There are

approximately 10 miles of river frontage on the Salmon Falls River, the Branch River, and the Jones Brook.

The equine community has been familiarized to this wonderful resource through organized trail riding events and hunts held on this property. Riders also ride the trails informally. Recently the land was posted that horseback riding is by permission. NHHHC talked to the managing trustee to find more about the policy and to share the following with the equine community. Please remember our equine trail etiquette rules. When securing permission it will be helpful to let the trustees know your understanding of trail etiquette. Rules examples are--Stay off fields, most of the fields have a trail to follow, so stay on the trail or ask if you can ride along the field edge when a trail is not visible. Avoid wet trails, especially after heavy rains, give the trail time to dry. Avoid trails in the spring until frost is out of the ground and trails have had a chance to dry from the melt. Stay off trails with frost heaves. Do not leave deep tracks--turn around and try another day. Let the trustees know you are willing to be a trail ambassador who will remind others of ALL the trail etiquette rules. Wishing everyone a great new riding year.

Lafayette Brook Acquisition –NHHHC-TC sends notice to equine community to submit comments by Sept. 11 or attend the meeting to encourage this State acquisition to include equine trail use. The NH Division of Parks and Recreation held a public information session in August to discuss the proposed acquisition of approximately 400 acres of undeveloped land on Profile Road in Franconia. The Lafayette Brook property directly abuts Franconia Notch State Park and the White Mountain National Forest.

The Division is interested in acquiring the property for the following reasons:

1. To protect the view shed from the Cannon Mountain and Mittersill ridges.
2. Maintenance and potential expansion of the existing trail use on the property and to potentially connect it to the trails in Franconia Notch State Park and the White Mountain National Forest.
3. Future state park recreational development on the flatter terrain to compliment the more mountainous terrain in the rest of the park and expand existing services.
4. To protect the forested area located on the lower slopes of Lafayette Brook.
5. Wildlife habitat management and protection.
6. Demonstrate sustainable forest management.

Short-term plans at the property include constructing a small parking area for the public to access the parcel, maintenance of the existing trail network, installation of an informational kiosk, and installing of a pit toilet.

Rockingham Recreational Trail Committee: Committee members are approved by NH Parks & Recreation who in turn help to maintain Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail. Committee members have representatives for Snowmobiles, ATV's, Equestrians and Hikers. Trixie L. a hiker/equine member of the committee, 4 equestrians from Rockingham Riding Club (RRC) and 1 from NHHHC/DTR attended a trail care day on Oct. 16. RRC volunteers yearly. Equestrians worked in cooperation with 4 members from the snowmobile club removing debris/trash, downed trees and limbs from starting on the west side of Route 125 – Epping, NH and ending at North Road – Fremont, NH.

The Greenfield Trails Association—Marlene P. works closely with this organization who's members are predominantly mountain bikers and participates in trail maintenance. This trail system allows horseback riding. 33+ miles of trails wind all through Greenfield on private land, Class VI roads or old logging roads and Class V dirt roads with incredible views.

Committee Meetings & Happenings

NHHHC Trails Committee meetings: Jan. 26 open meeting, March 26 open meeting, Sept 16. Open meetings were sent to the equine community. The committee is very active with E-mails between meetings and notices are sent to the equine community often throughout the year. Let us know if you want to be on our trail e-mail list, contact nhhctrails@aol.com

NH High School Equestrian Team's—NHHHC-TC meets with the NHHSET Board on April 26 to encourage involvement with trails and possible consideration of including trail volunteer activities to the public service list in their scholarship program application.

Statistics: NHHHC-TC is looking to gather statistics from local or out of state data bases on equine trail riding/driving to support the value of our economic impact. NH State Vet does not gather amount of horses participating in veterinarian care. Some equine statistics were found in the following link.

[https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1, Chapter_2_US_State_Level/st99_2_018_018.pdf](https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_US_State_Level/st99_2_018_018.pdf).

NH Agriculture Lorraine Merrill says NH uses the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service 2012 Agricultural Census: 9,097 horses and ponies. But this would be horses and ponies on farms. A farm is any operation reporting gross sales of \$1,000 or more, or those that normally would have expected to sell \$1,000 or more in farm products or services. Typically the only farms that respond are those who are listed as a business making a min. of \$1000 annually. Obviously, this would not count a lot of horses and ponies in New Hampshire.

American Horse Council Economic Study-Plans to conduct study in 2017. NHHC-TC sends notice of AHC asking for pledges (a promise to send money) or donations before December 31, 2016 in order to have an idea of how much funding they have to cover the cost of \$500,000 needed for the study. This study is slated to contain questions on who trails rides. Last survey was done in 2005. Much has changed since then. We need current information that can be used for legislation and accessing trails for both national and state levels. Statistics on equine economic impacts are often asked for when promoting trails. States can become a breakout state where their information is separated out for another \$20,000.

Mounted Police Self Defense on Horseback—NHHC-TC spoke with Bill Richey, Mounted Police instructor, and helped to arrange and promote the seminar hosted by Riley's Farm, Epping NH in June. Approximately 15 persons audited and 3 volunteer riders participated.

MWW Equine Group:

Publications for trail education

Trail Users are recommended to view From Lemons to Lemonade Creating Sustainable Trails -- An ELCR Webinar - YouTube.mht
NHHC has a copy of ELCR's complimentary American Trails Webinar by Jan Hancock's "Horses and Trails - How To Be Successful With Both!"

NHHC recommends viewing USDA Forest Service Trail Fundamentals for equestrian trails.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/trail-fundamentals/>

The Stewardship Network: New England Training Guide Trail Maintenance for Volunteers

<http://newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/training-guides>

[NHHC Guidelines for Equestrian Trails](#)

[NHHC Equestrian Guidelines for Trailer Parking](#)

[NHHC Guidelines for Equestrian Trails-Bridges](#)

Sincerely Submitted

NH Horse Council Trails Committee