

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
Trails Council
August 7, 2008 - 6:30 PM
Minutes

Trails Council Chair Jane Daniels called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. at the Trail Conference office in Mahwah, N.J. She asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Present were: Jane Daniels - Chair, Christie Ferguson - East Hudson Regional Representative, Larry Wheelock - West Hudson Regional Representative, Ed Goodell - Executive Director, Bill O'Hearn, Catherine Gemmell, J. Cal Rizzuto, Eddie Walsh, Estelle Anderson, Jill Arbuckle, Henry Atterbury, Bill Burns, Carol Burns, Jim Canfield, Chris Connolly, Daniel D. Chazin, Jane Daniels, Walt Daniels, Monica Day, Jack Driller, Donna Fichter, Jakob Franke, Jim Gebhard, Gene Giordano, Bob Jonas, John Mack, Paul Makus, Mike Manes, John Moran, Gail Neffinger, Glenn Oleksak, Sandy Parr, Alan Rosenberg, Frank Schoof, Karen Schoof, Manny Silberberg, Ike Siskind, Denise Vitale, Georgette Weir.

1. Announcements

The following announcements were made:

a. Tools

Eddie Walsh announced that he has prepared a list of tools that have been acquired by the Trail Conference in connection with various work projects and are available for use. He noted that some of the tools (such as chainsaws) can be operated only by those who have taken special training, and he stated that those who wish to use these tools should contact their Trails Chair or Regional Representative

b. Fall Workshops

Larry Wheelock announced that the following trail workshops will be held this fall:

September 28th: Advanced A.T. Corridor Monitoring Workshop (at the RPH Shelter).

October 11th: Maintenance 101 (at the Ellenville Public Library)

October 25th: Maintenance 101 (at a location in western New Jersey)

November 1st: Trail Construction and Restoration (at a location in northern New Jersey).

November 15-16: Chainsaw safety certification course. He noted that preference for registration in this course will be given to A.T. maintainers, who are required to be certified in order to use a chainsaw, and that recertification will be offered as a one-day course.

Walt Daniels noted that all of these workshops are on our website and that one can register online

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Trails Council meeting of June 5, 2008 were approved as submitted.

3. Committee Reports

a. *Conservation and Advocacy*

- i. Bill O'Hearn reported that he has heard that Green Acres is about to acquire the Lefkowitz property in Ringwood, New Jersey. He also noted that acquisition of the Shirazi property in Monroe, New York (adjacent to Sterling Forest) is awaiting funding from Orange County. Finally, he pointed out that the Long Path Study Bill was introduced into Congress but will probably not be acted on until the next session.
- ii. Ed Goodell noted that Brenda Holzinger is working on advancing ATV legislation in New Jersey. Ed Goodell noted that Brenda Holzinger is working on advancing ATV legislation in New Jersey.

b. *Publications*

Daniel Chazin reported that a new edition of the Sterling Forest Trails map should be printed during the month of September, and that we are also currently working on a new digital edition of the Kittatinny Trails map set. He also noted that, within the next six months, we expect to come out with revised editions of our Harriman, Hudson Palisades and North Jersey map sets, and he asked all those who know of changes to these maps to contact him, so that the changes can be incorporated into the new editions of these maps.

4. Trail Approvals

- a. *Lake Sonoma Trail (Norvin Green State Forest)*. John Moran reported that the two-mile-long Lake Sonoma Trail in the northern part of Norvin Green State Forest, north of West Brook Road, has been completed. He showed the Council the route of the trail and noted that it includes several beautiful viewpoints. He also reported that work will commence tomorrow on the new Overlook Rock Trail, which will connect the Lake Sonoma Trail with the Hewitt-Butler Trail.
- b. *West Brook Connector Trail (Norvin Green State Forest)*. Frank Schoof explained his proposal to connect the northern section of the Hewitt-Butler Trail with the Camp Wyanokie Trail by creating an attractive 1,600-foot trail along the West Brook, parallel to West Brook Road. He noted that some boulders and blowdowns would have to be removed, and some sidehilling would have to be constructed. After discussion, it was moved, seconded and unanimously carried that the West Brook Connector Trail be approved by the Trails Council.
- c. *Halifax Trail (Ramapo Valley County Reservation)*. John Moran outlined an 0.4-mile relocation of the Halifax Trail in Ramapo Valley County Reservation that replaces a road walk on the paved Bear Swamp Road with a parallel footpath. He noted that this relocation was completed about two months ago.
- d. *Shawangunk Ridge Trail*. Jakob Franke noted that a map has finally been prepared for the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, although it does not contain all features found on other Trail Conference maps that are offered for sale. He explained that both an overview map and three detailed 8½x11 maps of the trail are available, and he noted that the maps would be posted on the web. He thanked Jeremy Apgar and Andy Garrison for their contributions in creating these maps.

Jakob Franke explained that there would be a reroute of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail in the Sam's Point area. He noted that the relocated trail follows an old woods

road to Route 52 and then follows the South Gully Trail, and he stated that most of the old route would be abandoned. Jakob Franke also reported that the Shawangunk Ridge Trail has been relocated along the Basha Kill to follow a wildlife trail where the rail-trail has been washed out. He also noted we have restored the trail to its original route in Gobbler's Knob. In response to a question, Jakob Franke stated that camping is permitted on some DEC lands along the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, and that there are several campgrounds near the trail.

5. Old Business/Updates

Trail Building Business –

Ed Goodell reported that, before embarking on a new paid trail building project, he always consults the Trails Chair in the area affected.

With regard to the Bear Mountain Project, he reported that PIPC has donated \$50,000 to the Trail Conference this year to defray the cost of this project, and that they have agreed to make the same donation next year. He stated that we are working on a new trail that will ascend High Tor from the Village of Haverstraw, and that our proposal to build two bridges at the northern end of Echo Lake has been approved for funding.

In addition, he noted, we are doing a consultation for the Village of Ridgewood regarding a short proposed trail in the village. He stated that we expect to do another phase at Wappingers Falls and at the Closter Nature Center in New Jersey, and that we also have proposals to Friends of Van Cortlandt Park and the Angle Fly Preserve in Westchester County.

6. New Business/Discussion

- a. *Trails Policy.* -- Jane Daniels stated that she will be working with the staff on a Trails Policy and that it will be presented to the Trails Council at a future meeting.
- b. *Regular and Wilderness First Aid Certification.* -- Estelle Anderson reported that the American Heart Association has agreed to present a wilderness first aid course at a time and location of our choosing. Alternatively, she noted, the AMC will offer our supervisors their member rate for a two-day class in wilderness first aid that will be offered in November. It was moved that the Trails Council recommend to the Board that the Conference reimburse chainsawyers for the cost of these courses, since chainsawyers are required to have basic first aid and basic CPR training to obtain certification. At the suggestion of Jill Arbuckle, it was agreed that chainsawyers must make two work trips before obtaining reimbursement. After discussion, the motion was seconded and carried unanimously, with two abstentions. It was agreed that the issue of training, including a possible requirement that crew chiefs obtain first aid certification, would be discussed at a future Trails Council meeting.
- c. *Minnewaska State Park Preserve Master Plan.* -- Larry Wheelock reported that, in late June, the Trail Conference was notified that the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation would be starting a new master plan process for Minnewaska State Park Preserve. He stated that it appears that the planners whom they have hired are doing a very good job. Larry Wheelock reported that two public information meetings were held in July (at which hikers were well represented), and that written comments can be submitted until Monday, August 11th. He stated that a draft plan is expected to be ready by January and that a final master plan is scheduled to be adopted in June. He noted that we have completed a draft of our written recommendations, which were distributed to members of the

Trails Council prior to the meeting, and urged that anyone with any comments should contact Ed Goodell or Daniel Chazin, who would be responsible for preparing the final version.

- d. *Upcoming ATC Policy Proposals.* -- Walt Daniels explained that he is the representative of the Mid-Atlantic Region to the ATC Stewardship Council, and that the Stewardship Council and Regional Policy Council will be considering several policies at their November meeting. He stated that the first is a geocaching policy, which is not of major concern to the Trail Conference. Walt Daniels explained that geocaching is currently prohibited on the A.T., and the proposal provides that will be permitted, but only with the consent of the landowner.

Walt Daniels also noted that a complaint was made at the Ramapo 2007 conference regarding a hiker's ability to find side trails to the A.T. He stated that, as a result, a policy has been proposed that would require all side trails to the A.T. to be signed, shown on the official A.T. maps and maintained, and that all other trails be taken off the official AT maps. Walt Daniels commented that this policy might be appropriate for remote areas in the South, but that it does not fit the situation in New York and New Jersey, where many woods roads and other trails intersect the A.T. After a brief discussion, it was moved, seconded and unanimously carried that the Trails Council officially objects to this proposed policy regarding side trails to the AT

- e. *Trail Conference Youth Policy.* -- Jane Daniels noted that the Volunteer Committee is working on formulating a Youth Policy, and she requested that all those who regularly work with youth to review the draft policy
- f. *Discussion re Mountain Bikes.* -- Henry Atterbury explained the benefits of the Trail Conference working together with mountain bike groups, and he recommended that we start discussions with various bike groups. Gene Giordano commented favorably on his relationship with the Ramapo Valley Cycling Club. However, Larry Wheelock pointed out that many cyclists are not organized into groups, and he questioned how we could effectively deal with individual mountain bikers. There was also concern voiced about cooperation between mountain bike groups and ATV groups, with both groups pushing for more multi-use trails. Bill O'Hearn expressed the view that multi-use trails do not work, and that we should instead advocate separate single-track trails for both hikers and cyclists in the same park.

Ed Goodell spoke in favor of cooperation with organized mountain bike groups and stated that, at times, it might be appropriate for us to advocate for an increased number of bike trails as part of a "diverse" system of trails (in contrast to "shared" trails) in a given park. He also stressed the importance of the principle of "no net loss" to our hiking trails, and he stated that we need to develop standards for hiking trails and bike trails that can be applied to new situations. Gene Giordano pointed out that IMBA has already developed standards for bike trails, and he questioned whether we have the right to tell the bike community what kind of trails they should build. Jim Gebhard suggested that we meet with the Gunks Mountain Biking Association (GUMBA) to discuss common concerns, such as improving access to trails in Minnewaska State Park Preserve and the Mohonk Preserve.

Jane Daniels explained that any decision to seek cooperation with mountain bike groups would have to be approved by the Board. She noted that, historically, the Trail Conference has not sought to dialogue with mountain bike groups, and that

some Conference members would strongly object to such dialogue.

The question was raised as to whether Conference maps show which trails are open to bikes, and it was noted that most of our existing maps do not do this, in part because of the difficulty of determining which trails are open to mountain bikes. Gene Giordano commented that many parks, such as Ringwood and Wawayanda, have no intention of enforcing hiking-only rules for trails, and that bikers far outnumber hikers in these parks.

There was a general consensus that we need to review this issue further.

- g. *Topics for Further Discussion.* -- Jack Driller expressed interest in learning more about the database. Walt Daniels pointed out that the Conference is currently adopting a new type of database.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel D. Chazin