



CT Horse Council TRAIL NEWS Volunteer Horse Patrol SPRING 2010



Submitted by Diane Ciano

NOTE: Please read page 8 for:

CT DEP Press Release: Recreational Trail Use Information

National Trails Day Events

Natchaug State Forest, Hampton:

CHC received the final approval to start the **Lost Silvermine Horse Camp** Project!

A workday to construct and install a kiosk for our first project to renovate the camp is scheduled for National Trails Day, Saturday, June 5th. A VHP Campout & trail ride will take place that weekend.

Goodwin State Forest, Hampton:

The newly formed group, Friends of Goodwin State Forest is holding a National Trails Day event on Saturday June 5th to introduce the public to the forest and educational center.

CHC-VHP is looking for a couple of VHP members & their mounts to meet and greet the public from 1-4 p.m. Please call Diane if you can help. (203)757-1904

***Both forests are near by and these National Trails Day Events can be coordinated with our VHP Camp out.**

Pachaug State Forest, Voluntown:

Markers for Pachaug SF will be purchased for this spring to be posted on the approved trails. CHC will need help in marking them. Please call Diane if you can help.

CT Forest Roundtables

Diane reported that there was a coalition of conservation groups that hosted 4 separate "roundtables" in February, designed to create a vision for what Connecticut's forests might become in the future. The results will lay the foundation for an important state forest planning process underway right now. This forest resource "assessment" and plan, under the direction of the Connecticut Division of Forestry, will directly impact the amount of federal funding Connecticut receives for future forest management and conservation.

Diane noted that was a great opportunity for equestrians to get involved to directly influence Connecticut policy for the future of our forests. A goal of CHC Trails was to have local equestrians and organizations participate at each roundtable event across the state, as this was a venue for equestrians to address usage of our forestlands such as parking availability for trailers, access for equestrians and carriage drivers and signs. CHC Trails encourages public land owners to provide "friendly user recreation" that would encourage CT residents and others to visit and vacation in Connecticut that will ultimately help to bring income back into our state's economy.

A BIG Thank you to the members of the CHC that gave their time to participate:

Shirley Vicchitto, Diane Ciano, Jan Collins, Gina McManus, and Peg Lupone. Also, a thank you goes to **Representative Debralee Hovey** who attended the round table in Bethel.

Past Educational Programs & Events:

CHC & VHP Presentations - Bethany & East Haddam - Meg & Diane presented the Volunteer Horse Patrol Program and information on CHC to the **Bethany Horsemen, Inc.** and the **Connecticut Valley Driving Club**.

VHP Presentation - Newington - Meg & Diane presented the Volunteer Horse Patrol Program for New & Interested Members – This was an open invitation and we had over 40 attendees. From this presentation, we now have **29** New VHP members to the program! Attendees were asked to bring horse equipment donations for the rescued horses at Niantic. Thank you to all who contributed to this.

Larkin Bridle Trail Update:

Diane noted that the Reward Signs need to be replaced – the winter storms took havoc on them – the red ink ran and they need to be redone in black ink only. Some of the signs were torn at some of the crossings. There have been no leads to finding those responsible for the incident.

CHC Trails Committee News:

New England National Scenic Trail News (formerly the MMM Trail)

Mary Lou Millet and Fred Mastele have been attending the Sub-Committee Meetings of the Trail Stewardship Council. Fred was elected Chair of the Trail Use Committee. They are seeking to evaluate the entire trail for its condition and user groups that are now using it (legally or otherwise). Diane attended one of these meeting and presented the Equestrian Trails Evaluation book that CHC had done a few years ago. A copy was given to the National Park Service (NPS). CHC had done two separate evaluations for the study and presented it to CFPAs as a guideline for their evaluation they will be developing, as the trail needs a current evaluation since there has been trail relocations. At this particular meeting it was noted that where the trail utilizes state DEP land in the southern part (Mattabeset Trail) - Cockaponset area will remain multi-use (*thanks to DEP Supervisor Alex Sokolow*). The Northern section of the trail (Metacomet) is questionable as to whether multi-use will be included on state land. Diane noted that CHC needs to contact DEP Supervisor Vinny Messino on land issues he may have and get involved in multiple use access where accessible on state land. Mary Lou Millet continues attendance on the Landowners & Trail Protection Committee and reports back to CHC Trails Committee.

Recreational Trails Act Advisory Board met at DEP to discuss issues and revisions of the RTA Applications including definitions of multi-use. Diane Ciano & Jan Collins who represented equestrians offered suggestions on changes on the applications that would define multiple use to clarify the point value system and ratings on future RTA applications. CHC supported the change to include a specific definition of multi-use trail to include equestrian and bicycle use and a requirement of the grant applicant to contact all user groups for input for their project. There was also discussion on two projects that received approval by the Advisory Board to include equestrian use (Keney Park renovations (Hartford) & land acquisition of the Town of Harwinton that would connect town owned land to state (Roraback WMA). A review of the criteria and suggestions to future applicants also included multi-use bridges or water crossings. The final outcome of the meeting will be reported once Diane & Jan receive notice from DEP.

CT Horse Council Recognition Awards & VHP Annual Meeting

Legislators, DEP Personnel, CHC Officers and VHP members were honored for their dedication and support to the equestrian community.

VHP awards were given to those members with high numbers on their patrols, patrol and trail maintenance hours.



Over 40 VHP members and guests in attendance



Meg Sautter & Diane Ciano

Volunteer Horse Patrol Statistics for 2009

The VHP has come a long way from its small start in 2003 of 5 patrol areas to **58** areas around the state, including town parks, open spaces and land trusts. As we continue to grow, we are expanding our riding opportunities and helping to create long distance connecting trails. Congratulations to you all, because each of your patrol logs, no matter how many hours you patrol and maintain trails adds to the grander total of statewide hours. This service provides CHC, DEP and other Land Management Areas with information on how the equestrian community is continuing its effort to maintain trails for multiple use, while promoting and educating the community and other equestrians of our volunteer efforts.

For 2009, we had a total of **1,654 patrols** with **58 patrol locations** around the state in parks, forests, wildlife management areas, preserves, land trusts, town parks and open spaces.

There were **3,905 patrol hours** logged with **692** hours of trail maintenance, saving the state (that's you and me!) **\$76,144.00** for **2009** alone!

There were 16 areas of DEP land and 10 others, making a total of 38 areas patrolled statewide.

The total savings of our 7 years in volunteer service hours is **\$312,655.00** !

The 7 years include **6,158*** Patrols, **16,029** Patrol Hours
with **2,941** Trail Maintenance Hours.

2009 Volunteer Horse Patrol Member Awards

Patrol Hours over 100:

1. **Meg Sautter**: 315 patrol hours, 60 Trail Maintenance hours, 93 patrols, 32 locations
 2. **Vevette Greenberg**: 230 patrol hours, 39 Trail Maintenance hours, 76 patrols, 21 locations
 3. **Diane Ciano**: 224 patrol hours, 39 Trail Maintenance hours, 66 patrols, 31 locations
 4. **Alesia DiFederico**: 183 patrol hours, 22 Trail Maintenance hours, 58 patrols, 16 locations
 5. **Lynda Perry**: 167 patrol hours, 22 Trail Maintenance hours, 61 patrols, 16 locations
 6. **Jim Griffin**: 157 patrol hours, 18 Trail Maintenance hours, 72 patrols
 7. **Jane Samuels**: 153 patrol hours, 92 patrols
 8. **Cathie Mestermaker-Harris**: 140 patrol hours, 60 patrols
 9. **Penny Foisey**: 123 patrol hours, 27 Trail Maintenance hours, 47 patrols
 10. **Debbie Sommers**: 119 patrol hours, 39 Trail Maintenance hours, 53 patrols, 13 locations
 11. **Phyllis Alexander**: 116 patrol hours, 27 Trail Maintenance hours, 52 patrols
 12. **Jean Morrison**: 106 patrol hours, 55 patrols
 13. **Barbara White**: 103 patrol hours, 36 patrols
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Patrol Hours over 50

14. **Debbie O'Donnell**: 94 patrol hours, 32 Trail Maintenance hours, 39 patrols, 12 locations
 15. **Diane Morton**: 91 patrol hours, 29 patrols
 16. **Melanie Langan**: 89 patrol hours, 30 Trail Maintenance hours, 38 patrols
 17. **Peg Lupone**: 83 patrol hours, 36 patrols
 18. **Cheryl Mastele**: 80 patrol hours, 37 patrols
 19. **Susan Parrow**: 66 patrol hours, 23 patrols
 20. **Gina McManus**: 62 patrol hours, 47 Trail Maintenance hours, 54 patrols
 21. **Pat Bandzes**: 57 patrol hours, 26 patrols
 22. **Rose Mary Biegger**: 56 patrol hours, 41 patrols
 23. **Jan Collins**: 56 patrol hours, 23 patrols
 24. **Judy Beliveau**: 56 patrol hours, 16 patrols
 25. **Fred Mastele**: 55 patrol hours, 24 patrols
 26. **Jeanna Pellino**: 53 patrol hours, 24 patrols
 27. **Denise Ciano**: 52 patrol hours, 18 patrols
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TRAIL MAINTENANCE HOURS Over 25

Meg Sautter - 60

Gina McManus - 47

Diane Ciano - 39

Vevette Greenberg - 39

Debbie Sommers - 39

Debbie O'Donnell - 32

Melanie Langan - 30

Lynda Perry - 28

Phyllis Alexander - 27

Penny Foisey - 27

MOST LOCATIONS PATROLLED

Meg Sautter - 32

Diane Ciano - 31

Vevette Greenberg - 21

Alesia DiFederico - 16

Debbie Sommers - 13

Debbie O'Donnell - 12

Judy Beliveau - 11

Denise Ciano - 10

Congratulations to the following new applicants that have completed all the requirements to the Volunteer Horse Patrol Program:

Andrea Brosnan & Cinnamon, Newtown
Jess Kuwayne - Tanka & Tex, Oxford
Jody Dardis & Sweet Baby Jane, Oxford
Patti Crowther - Cledus(Catch the Threat) & Sassy (Senora Cinamon Sue), Naugatuck
Melissa Evarts - Homes & Hero, Clinton
Joe Celano - Tiana & Clarin, Guilford
Joel Camassar & Panda, Durham
Sandy Frederick & Mica, Middlefield
Hannah Hale & Crystal, Middletown
Krystal Florio - Imposter & Koko, Killingworth
Steve Pietruszka - Imposter & Koko, Northford
Linda Wenner - Dawn & Irish, Hampton
Heather Hicks & Arwen, Southwick, MA
Ed Geigner & Joey, Granby
Joan Davis - Bullet & Cherokee, West Granby
Chris Weatherhead & Brogue, Granby
Bonnie Tyler & Chance, East Granby
Gloria Ludwig & Chance, West Suffield
Dottie Gozzo & Romeo, Windsor

VHP members clean up at Babcock Wildlife Management Area - Colchester

CHC-VHP members Anne Albee and Jack Connors did their own clean up at the WMA that borders their property. Pictured is Jack Connors with some of the trash that was picked up.

Thanks Anne & Jack!



VHP Blessing of the Mounts



On May 8, 2010 the annual Blessing of the Mounts was performed. We gathered on a rainy Saturday in Matthies Park, Naugatuck. Steve Vicchitto, Priest and Volunteer Horse Patrol member, officiated. The other five VHP members were Shirley Vicchitto, Diane Ciano, Vevette Greenberg, Alesia DiFederico and photographer Meg Sautter.

After a brief morning shower, we rode through Matthies Park to Naugatuck State Park. We looped around the four reservoirs and returned to our trailers back in Matthies Park.

We had a great day despite the weather and lack of participants. Thank you, Steve, for your patience, understanding and blessing.

Farewell to Patrol Horse Houdini who passed away just before Christmas 2009. Our sincere sympathy goes out to Marylou Millet of Durham, VHP Coordinator for the Rockland Preserve in Madison.

Marylou writes "Houdini passed away, leaving not only a vast emptiness, but also many wonderful memories for those who remember him. Everyone who rode Houdini or who knew him loved him. He was known for always giving 110% while out on patrol as a VHP horse OR competing at Hunter Paces. In his too brief life (19 YO) he tackled the trails as though he had been trained for that as well, and provided endless hours of pleasure and pride for me, my husband Doug, as well as friends and family. I loved Houdini and the memories will last a lifetime. We began together, we learned and grew together. He will be loved FOREVER."

Hoofbeats in Heaven

Candle Lighting Tribute To Houdini



Candlelight

*As my candle, burning bright
Sends shadows off on this dark night
It offers peace, and hope and love
To the horses dancing up above.*

*My prayers and thoughts will help them find
Beloved friends they left behind.
So they may comfort us in turn,
And thus it is my candle burns.*

*With quiet tears, lovingly shed
I hear the horses, overhead.
Their pounding hooves are thunder stirred,
For another other friend has joined the herd.*

Paige Cerullo

A candle has been lit for Houdini on the Hoofbeats in Heaven ,Candle Lighting Tributes website: <http://www.hoofbeats-in-heaven.com/candlelighting/>

Connecticut DEP Recreational Trail Use Information

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) wants to remind trail users of rules and trail etiquette now that warmer weather is here and many people will be spending time outdoors in Connecticut's state parks and forests. To make your outdoor experience as safe and enjoyable as possible, the DEP recommends following the tips below to ensure your experience will be a positive one.

State park and forest recreation areas operation hours - daily between sunrise and sunset.

What you can and cannot do on the trails:

- Trails and service, logging and other roads are open to non-motorized, multiple use activities (foot travel, mountain biking, equestrian) unless posted closed.
- Connecticut Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails and the National Park Service Appalachian Trail are limited to hiking except where they overlap a multiple use trail.
- Public roadways in state parks and forests are open to registered motor vehicles (includes registered dirt bikes) and non-motorized multiple uses unless posted closed.
- Effective January 1, 2006, riding an ATV on state or municipal property may result in charges of criminal trespass. (Public Act 05-234) At the current time, Connecticut does NOT have any public areas open to quads.
- Registered dirt bikes can ride on the motorized trail at Pachaug State Forest or at the Thomaston Dam (visit <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/tmd/tmdhome.htm>).
- Trail building and maintenance is illegal unless authorized. To request permission to put in a new trail contact DEP's Trails Coordinator at 860-424-3578. For permission to perform trail maintenance contact the Park Supervisor.
- After it rains, please be aware of fragile areas that should be avoided such as wetlands and steep slopes. For your safety and to prevent erosion and disruption of habitats always avoid travel through streams that have no bridges or stepping stones.

If you see an illegal activities please call the State Environmental Conservation Police (EnCon) at: 860 424-3333.

Essential for Safe Trail Use:

- Always let others know where you are and when you expect to return.
- Be aware where hunting is allowed and if hunting season is open. Wear bright orange for extra protection.
- Remain on trails that are blazed.
- Cyclists and motorized users yield to pedestrians and equestrians. Pedestrians yield to equestrians.
- Park in designated areas only.
- Keep your dogs on a leash.
- Respect private property - when you are leaving State Land you may no longer have permission to recreate.
- Plan your route! Trail maps are often found trail heads and always found on the DEP

Website: <http://www.ct.gov/dep/parkmaps>
Cyndy Chanaca, Office of Communications
CT DEP - 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106