

Greenways & Trails Council Meeting
Kent County Levy Court, Dover, DE
April 27, 2011
9:30 a.m.

Welcome & Introductions

Charles Emerson, acting Chairperson, called the Council meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. He invited members and visitors to introduce themselves and identify their agency.

Approval Meeting Minutes

Mr. Emerson asked for a motion to approve the May 10, 2010 minutes as written. Peggy Koster moved to approve and Jim Ireland seconded, motion passed.

Reports

Education & Outreach – Diane Wilson, Council Member:

- Upcoming event: National Trails Day, June 4. This year's theme is '*Made with all Natural Ingredients*,' sponsored by the American Hiking Society. Planned events: Brandywine Creek - yearly clean up; Delaware Trail Spinners - continue improvements to Brandywine Park; Killens Pond - guided hike around pond; Lewes Greenways & Trails Committee members only to begin preliminary cleaning of proposed anglers trail; Newark organizing a 'Newark Night.'
- State Fair: July 29, Governor's Day - Council not participating this year.
- Fall event: Coast Day, October 2, at the College of Marine Studies, Lewes - Volunteers needed.
- The DE Recreation Parks Society on October 14, 2010 hosted the Trail Summit at the Sands Hotel in Rehoboth Beach. The Summit was postponed from February 2010 due to bad weather. Other sponsors were the Division of Parks & Recreation, Council on Greenways & Trails, Merit Construction, Century Engineering, and National Park Service. The event had a full house with over 150 participants.
- Public Open Houses were held February 21 & 22 on the proposed trail system for White Clay Creek State Park. 140 people attended over the two days. Most participants responded favorably to the information presented. Hikers expressed concern that they are uncomfortable sharing the trail with mountain bikers. Ms. Moerschel asked Council to read an article in the American Trails website, entitled *Resources & Best Practices Sought on Trail Conflict and Safety Issues*. California gathered Science Based Data on trail conflicts and ways to manage trails for trail users.
- National Get Outdoors Day, June 11. Milford will hold a Kids Fest on that day. This is a great way to connect children and families to nature and to forge strategic partnerships to support sustainable recreation.
- April 15 – President Obama proclaimed National Park Week from April 16 to April 24, 2011.

Equestrian – Peggy Koster, Council Member:

- The Equine Council's mission is to promote, protect, and enhance the keeping of equine in Delaware.
- Ms. Koster distributed the 12th Annual Equestrian Directory. Inside the Directory is a list of horse trails, provided by Delaware State Parks; the list is also available on the DE State Parks web site under trails.
- Equine Council Scholarship fundraiser held a Dinner/Dance on March 12 and presented \$5,000 worth of scholarships to students in the field of agriculture and/or Equine based studies.
- Equine Expo held on March 19 at the Harrington State Fair was the biggest and best to date. The Expo had vendors set up with their main goal to educate and bring awareness on Health issues, safety around horses, public trails, and giving back to the community.
- Trails Committee for the Council placed Equine Trail parking signs around Trap Pond State Park.

- Mary Everhard (Equine Council) is working with David Bartoo reviewing potential horse trails in White Clay Creek State Park. The Equine Council had its annual interagency meeting with State Parks & Recreation, Forestry, and Fish & Wildlife. They discussed trail issues and concerns within the State. Last year Council asked Fish & Wildlife to open some trails in the Nanticoke Wildlife Area – that request is still pending.
- Charlie Emerson said he was impressed with the Equine Council's progress and its involvement in State Parks.
- Chazz Salkin asked whether the Equine Council had discussed the Nanticoke Area at their annual meeting. Ms. Koster said yes, and a follow-up meeting is scheduled with Fish & Wildlife on May 24.

Mountain Biking – Jim Ireland, Council Member:

- Delaware Trail Spinners (DTS) have had a busy year. The American Trails and the Coalition for Recreational Trails recognized the organization for two awards.
- Bob Gaston, DTS, participated in several trail projects within New Castle County and Maryland. The Spinners are starting new partnerships working on new trail plans with the Elk Neck State Park in Maryland and in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania.
- In Pennsylvania, DTS are collaborating with Franklin Township to create a new trail access on a recently acquired 62-acre site at Wilkinson.
- DTS held its first bike swap in the City of Newark in March with 300+ people in attendance.
- DTS continue to coordinate with New Castle County to create sustainable trails in the Middle Run Valley Natural Area.
- DTS are working toward putting a demonstration pump track behind the White Clay Creek State Park Possum Hill shop with hopes of getting children to learn how to build and use pump bikes.
- The Newark Bicycle Committee is actively updating a Bicycle Plan to present to City Council – the plan calls for creating off-road bicycle facilities and improvements in bike lanes. The Plan identifies the need for a bike pump track. The College in Newark has a large number of cyclists. DelDOT donated 19 bike racks to the City of Newark that will be placed on Main Street. The City hopes to add more racks as funds become available. Companies are encouraged to include bike racks in their development projects.

Bicycle Council – Mike Krumrine, Park Resource Office:

- The Bicycle Council holds meetings every first Wednesday of alternate months from 5:00PM to 7:00PM at DelDOT's Administration Building, Dover, DE.
- Bike Council welcomed Jim Ireland as a liaison member from the Council on Greenways & Trails. Jim is involved in many projects, is very knowledgeable, and has an outstanding volunteer work ethic.
- May 2011 is Bike Month. Planned activities include: May 10 - Legislative Ride from Newark to Dover; May 16 to 20 - Bike-to-Work week; May 19 – Ride of Silence, memorial ride to honor bike fatalities; May 20 - National bike to work day; May 21-22 Wilmington Grand Prix.
- Bicycle Council to hold its third Bike Summit in Sussex County, October 14 at Burton Center.
- Last year, Council lobbied Legislators to pass a Bill requiring motorists to give a 3-foot safe passing buffer to bicyclists. Council expects Legislators to sign Bill into law this year.
- Updated bicycle maps for New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties in progress.
- Education Committee within the Bike Council is working to add bicycle awareness education in schools and Defensive Driving Classes.
- Mr. Emerson said the Newark Bicycle Committee, working with DelDOT, the University of Delaware, and Newark Police, held their second Bicycle Safety checkpoint at Delaware Avenue. Many students stopped by and discussed safety and helmet use. The City is working through the University to educate international students about bicycle laws in Delaware.

Hiking - Wendell Cassel:

- The Wilmington Trail Club (WTC) offers Hiking, Paddling, Biking, Kayaking, and Skiing. www.wilmingtontrailclub.org.
- It is preparing to have a booth at White Clay Creek State Park on Saturday, May 7 at the Carpenter Recreation area.
- Plans underway to support the cleanup project on National Trails Day.
- The Club continues to sponsor a hike across Delaware in early November (DTBA). Hike begins at DE City and runs along the C&D Canal – a 14-mile hike.
- They are interested in the implementation of the Wilmington Trail Plan and volunteering in trail construction.
- Wendell talked with Mike Ott, Friends of White Clay Creek State Park, regarding their efforts on trail maintenance. They are waiting for the approval of the Park’s Trail Plan to begin working on trail projects.
- WTC is interested in connecting Trails in Delaware to extend to the Pennsylvania Preserve.

Grants Review – 2011 Cycle – Bob Ehemann:

Mr. Ehemann thanked the Grant Review Committee - Gail Van Gilder, Jim Ireland, Anthony Aglio, and Rich Phifer, who met to discuss and evaluate the projects for eligibility. The new rolling process could make it possible that every time the Council meets, there are new projects to review. Prior to this time, the Council reviewed grants only once a year.

The Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund (DTF) may grant matching funds to municipalities and counties for (1) park land acquisition; (2) outdoor recreation facilities including trail construction; and (3) park and trail planning. Grant administration and park/trail maintenance are not eligible for DTF assistance. The Division of Parks & Recreation administers the program.

Bob Ehemann presented the list of projects reviewed and recommended by the Grant Review Committee full Council consideration:

DTF Grants Projects - 2011

| Sponsor | Name | DTF Request | Demonstrated Match | Grant Review Committee Recommends |
|--|---|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| City of Milford | Mispillion Riverwalk | \$185,000 | \$185,000 | \$185,000 |
| City of Dover | St. Jones River Watershed Riparian Buffer | \$8,358 | \$10,481 | \$8,358 |
| City of Newark | Redd Park Trail Improvements | \$103,300 | \$103,300 | \$103,300 |
| Current DTF Grant Request | | | | \$296,658 |
| 2011 DTF Grant Funds for Trail Projects | | | \$750,000 | |
| Previously Approved (Kent County – Kesselring Acquisition) | | | \$250,000 | |
| Current DTF Grant Request Total | | | \$296,658 | |
| DTF Funds (balance) available for future trail projects | | | | \$203,343 |

After discussions, Charles Emerson asked for a motion to accept and approve all three DTF Grant applications presented and as recommended by the Grant Review Committee. Diane Wilson made a motion and Peggy Koster seconded. Motion passed.

Updates

White Clay Creek State Park (WCCSP) Trail Plan – David Bartoo, Trail Planner, Division of Parks & Recreation

David Bartoo explained that the objective of the Plan is to design sustainable trails that reduce soil erosion; avoid important natural and cultural resource areas; connect park management units; and create community connections.

- The proposed alignments and improvements for White Clay Creek State trail system traverses through the park's diverse landscape. WCCSP has the highest density of trail miles of all State Parks in Delaware.
- An in-depth look at the activities in and around the Park, such as playgrounds, bathrooms, amphitheaters, and activities in the neighborhoods, community connections, activities in the city and County level was undertaken. The University is also a big component for this type of trail plan because of the large number of students.
- Public Open Houses to review the proposed WCCSP Trail Plan were held February 21 & 22. One hundred & fifty (150) people attended. Five hundred & fifty (550) comments on the proposed plan were submitted to the Division. A majority of the comments favored the proposed Trail Plan.
- We are currently analyzing data internally and attempting to figure out what additions and deletions to make to finalize the Trail Plan. We expect to provide the Council with a future opportunity to review the WCCSP Trail Plan.

Wendell suggested an update on the Trail Plan to include a trail link between Creek Road and the Park Office. People are supportive of sustainable trail design.

Cape Henlopen State Park Trail Plan – Lee Ann Walling

Lee Ann Walling, Principal Planner at DNREC, presented the vision for a trail in Cape Henlopen State Park that would create an all-weather trail surface in the park from Herring Point to Gordons Pond. Though a trail corridor is in place, it is not fully accessible. Building a trail through this corridor will create a 15.5 loop connecting Lewes and Rehoboth.

The site for the trail is not only beautiful; it is also a highly sensitive resource area with dune fields, wetlands, and archaeological sites. Secretary O'Mara appointed a group, which includes David Bartoo and Mike Krumrine, to scrutinize natural and cultural resource, review alternative routes, determine the best optimal trail alignment, and estimate costs.

The team selected three options from the evaluation and analysis: Option A) - 2700-foot alignment through wetlands. Option B) – 2700-foot but different alignment than Option A; mitigates some of the wetland impacts. Option C) - using the current trail alignment but add an elevated boardwalk infrastructure of 1100-feet more than Option B. Some people supported the trail alignment option, others thought the existing trail should not be changed or upgraded.

Issues looked at were sensitive areas, regulatory issues, sea level rises, and dune migration. All options are subject to some sort of sea level rise. The Gordons Pond Trail Working Group plans to have a realistic plan in place in about a month.

Trail Survey & Ranking Trail Issues – Kendall Sommers

At the Trail Summit [held October 2010], participants were asked to rank trail-related issues that were vetted from a Trail Survey (completed by Delaware's trail community). Participants were given four

dots each to rank priorities. The results of the ranking process will help inform and guide the issues that will be outlined in a Statewide Trail Plan. Two hundred & ninety six (296) dots were recorded. The top ranking priority was to ‘*Connect existing trails to complete trail systems.*’

Kendall is in the process of updating SCORP – a 5-year plan, and collaborating with Nemours.

Announcements

Ms. Moerschel noted in handouts a Dear College letter signed by Congressman Carney supporting the Recreational Trails Program and 36 other Congressional members from both parties.

Next Council meeting is August 10, 2011 in Dover - placed TBA, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Mr. Emerson asked for a motion to adjourn. Diane Wilson motioned and Wendell Cassel seconded. Meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Meeting Attendance

Appointed Members

Wendell Cassel
Charles Emerson, Acting Chair
James Ireland
Peggy Koster
Diane Wilson

Agency Members & Guests

Mary Everhart
Lee Ann Walling, DNREC

Division of Parks and Recreation Staff

David Bartoo
Bob Ehemann
Mike Krumrine
Susan Moerschel
Rich Phifer
Charles Salkin
Kendall Sommers