

January 5, 2012

A note from Sandra S. Batie, Chair of the Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS)

Re: 2011 Equine Trail Related Activities.

At this time of the year at which many reflect on the past year, I thought it would be good to note that 2011 has been a good year for equestrians. While not everyone got everything they may have wished for, there were many positive equine trail related activities. Here is some of the good news for trail riders that come to my mind.

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There is now an Equine Trailways Subcommittee (ETS) that has produced a report with 46 equine trail related recommendations.

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The Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund has approved \$300,000 funds (subject to legislative approval) to assist in developing and implementing a DNR Michigan equestrian plan. The plan will include implementation of many of the recommendations of the Equine Trailways Subcommittee --including providing an inventory and mapping of existing trails and facilities.

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There was a satisfactory resolution of the Michigan Trail Riders use of the Au Sable River at the Smith Bridge (in Crawford County) for the watering of horses on MTRA trail rides.

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Sleepy Hollow State Park opened a new and beautiful horse trail.

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The DNR signed a land use order that reopened three distributed equine campgrounds at the Pigeon River Country State Forest (PRCSF).

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The PRCSF's destination campground is being reconfigured for longer horse trailers and more camping sites are being made available at the campground. A reservation system will be going into place.

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The DNR is planning to provide approximately 53 miles of well marked looping equine trails in the PRCSF designed to avoid vehicular traffic

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The DNR is devoting resources to develop a website for improved communication with equine trail riders.

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The Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund has approved funds (subject to legislative approval) toward the purchase of up to 2600 acres near Manchester, Michigan. If acquired, the vision is to develop the property to include equestrian trails and facilities. If the land purchase is successful, the area will be known as the River Raisin Recreation Area.

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Improvements have been made to The Thunder Valley Trail in the UP.

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There has been a rerouting of the Waterloo Recreation Area Baldwin Road route for enhanced riding safety.

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There has been an addition of a new well and pump at the Brighton Recreation Area.

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There have been upgrades to the Goose Creek Trail Camp.

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Fort Custer has new trails with separate trails for bikers and horse riders.

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There are new human sanitary facilities at the horse trail camp in Yankee Springs.

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Waterloo riders were permitted to use an existing trail for a special ride to Green Lake.

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Work is ongoing to provide horse trails on at least part of the CIS (Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee) rails-to-trails.

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There is increased representation of trail riders on committees such as the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Committee and the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee, and the DNR has provided many forums for trail riders to express their opinions and advice.

Thanks to all who helped make possible these 2011 equine trail riding contributions.