

Vermont Horse Council
General Membership and Board meeting
10/24/15
UVM Morgan Horse Farm in Weybridge, VT

Speakers: Program Coordinator of Vermont Department Of Environmental Conservation's Solid Waste Program Donald Maglienti spoke and handed out information on composting horse manure. Pam Stefanek, District Manager of the Vermont Association of Conservation District (Addison County) spoke about small farm regulations with the Agency of Agriculture. The time to send in comments is now! She encourages us to stick up for our industry. She encourages us to look up Act 140A regarding composting.

Laura Hamilton spoke: she had 3 students receive scholarships. One of those students, Izzy, attended the meeting to thank us personally and tell us about what she learned at the "Owning Your Own Pony" camp.

Laura also let us know that Firefly Farm from Roxbury will be doing a demo at Equine Affaire in Springfield, MA Sunday at 11:15 am

1:00 pm - The meeting was called to order by Vice President Meg Costello

Motion made to accept secretary's minutes as printed in the newsletter made by Phyllis, seconded by Belinda

Treasurer's report was discussed and approved: currently there is \$4400 in the general fund. \$500 was transferred to merchandise expenses from promotional expenses. The status of the scholarship funds was discussed. Vickie Smith was encouraged to join the scholarship committee after she raised concerns about fund raising and potentially renaming the scholarship funds. She seems to have a lot of history with the organization which would be a big help.

NEKET fund has \$2200. Mike spoke about when VHC stopped charging \$5.00 for the NEKET map and pass, the extra \$5.00 was supposed to go into the NEKET fund. That never happened.

Motion to approve treasurer report made by Vickie, seconded by Mike.

Vickie suggested a budget committee be appointed.

NEKET: Mike spoke. The corridor management plan has been done. A suggestion of part of each membership fee be split into a trails fund (Groton, NEKET, other trail funds). No action taken

Membership: Doug Smith spoke: currently there are 155 members with 19 lifetime. Dues are due January 1st and are good until December 31st.

Meg spoke:

Carmel is not eligible to run for the Board for one year

Mane Stream will be used more for advertising

VHC's website is doing really well

Meg would like VHC members to attend more horse functions throughout the state, increasing awareness of VHC and increasing membership

Facebook is doing well

Website: we change webmasters, the new site is mobile friendly and is up to date all the time.

Michelle Warren is doing a great job with it.

Facebook: Laura Hamilton spoke. As a professional photographer, she felt inclined to mention that we users cannot 'right click' a picture and post it to the VHC website. Vickie is our facebook owner (admin) so sometimes the VHC logo is attached to Vickie's posts. More attention to detail will be made in future. Currently there are 475 followers with 17,500 views on one picture (which we do not own) so we have to 'share' it, not download it. We as a group do not have the 'rights' to that photo.

Meg spoke. **PSA:** That project has stalled at this time. It's too expensive.

Doug Spoke: **Everything Equine & Canine:** is not making enough money, so it will not happen in 2016

Tunbridge Annual ride: had about 130 riders and made about \$2200. It was another great ride

Phyllis spoke: Groton State Park: the work day happened; fund raiser paperwork was handed out. We need 14 more pens. Mike and Martha Benoit donated pens for one site already. Sucker Bridge has been reinforced by VAST. This week Mike and Morris will deliver wood for Peacham Bridge. Jack Brooks has a crew going in Tuesday or Wednesday. There is possible grant money to keep the project going.

Vickie Smith mentioned she would like to see high ties, not panels, as options for tying horses.

Forest & Parks is holding a meeting at National Life in Montpelier, open to multi-use groups Friday at 1 pm.

NEKET: Mike Benoit spoke: the corridor management agreement is finalized with the state. This gives us a lot of freedom.

NEKET is working with ANR to map and identify new trails in the west mountain area and Victory. Heidi, Karen Rosemark and Mike Benoit met with Jim Nickerson to increase trails. We will address having a sign-in/reception area to help with parking, etc. Mike met with the state and located new sites on South America Road for parking on an old log landing which can hold 8 to 10 rigs. That section is very unutilized right now. Trailer numbers and signage was lost due to logging.

NEKET annual ride: one family who arrived after the VHC ride complained about trash left behind.

Nobody from our group saw that.

Willowby: The Catholic Retreat Center has a huge field for parking. There are great trails, good footing, and can be a potential camp ground area. The state is re-doing that area's land use and equine trails will be added. The state really wants to work with multi-use trail groups.

Extreme Trail Play Date: Where'd the money go? (We made \$275 on the day including memberships, entries and sold one pouch)

Safety: CHAMP purchased 12 safety vests from VHC. VHC ordered "horse papers" zippered pouches for you to keep your coggins and other horse related info in.

Side note: bring pouches, signs, etc. to meetings to sell

Safety Summit: Governor's Highway Alliance had a gathering on the state house lawn in Montpelier, called Locomotion, the same weekend our Tunbridge ride was going on but we still had 4 riders attend.

American Horse Council: Belinda spoke. AHC reports serious disease outbreaks.

Scholarship: Belinda spoke. The scholarship fund is very popular.

Riding & Driving Report: Brenda reported via Belinda. Brenda is looking for more feedback from participants. Some people are not sending in their riding time. Please sign up and send in your riding time.

Trail Maintenance Fund: \$800 was budgeted for new decking on Suckerbrook Bridge but it was not needed because VAST paid for it. \$550 is needed for Peacham Bridge

Farm Bureau: Act 64 criteria of Farmers to comply with new regulation.

Farm Show: with the drop in rate to \$100. It was suggested we revisit the idea of having a booth at the Farm Show. Discussion ensued with no action taken.

Trail Guidelines:

Mike Benoit suggested we have a meet and greet table like what Karen Rosemark had at Willowby.

Nominating Committee:

Meg Costello is the chair with Martha Benoit as back-up

Carmel, Morris (Board members) Meg (VP) and Martha (Treasurer) are not running

Send nomination suggestions to Meg or Martha ASAP

Also, send suggestions for Horse Person of the Year to Heidi ASAP. The winner will be announced at the annual meeting in January.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm motion made by Phyllis, seconded by Doug Smith

Attendance 10/24/15:

Jill DeVoe
Belinda Brown
Cindy Sinclair
Art Sinclair
Deb Burleigh
Mike Benoit
Martha Benoit
Robin Severy
Jean Audet
Susan James
Vickie Smith
Laura Hamilton
Izzy Lalkson (scholarship recipient to Fire Fly Farm)
Phyllis Civitello
Mike Civitello
Meg Costello
Doug Smith
Terry Rose
Fay Ferris

Pamela Stefanek, (guest speaker from OCNRD)
Donald Maglienti (guest speaker from Vermont Department Of Environmental Conservaion's Solid Waste Program)