



# Trails Forum REPORT

**Tuesday March 16, 2010 7:00 - 8:30 P.M.**  
**West Vincent Township Building**

## Participants

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Debbie Grothmann	Ludwig's Corners Riding & Driving Club (LCRDC)	Brad Dyer	West Vincent Twp Park & Recreation Board
Debbie Camplone	LCRDC	Kim Hennessy	LCRDC
Chris Moore-Milne	LCRDC	Jan Bogar	LCRDC
Norma Strouse	LCRDC	Eileen Livezey	LCRDC
Janet Nichol	LCRDC	David Jones	LCRDC
Barb Chatman-Royce	LCRDC	Gail Rockwood	LCRDC
Judy Keller	LCRDC	Chrissy Hartman	LCRDC
Linda Morrison	LCRDC	Karen Heiss	LCRDC
Mark Adams	LCRDC	Ingrid M. Cantarell-Fox	Horse Shoe Trail Conservancy
Nick Seratino	LCRDC	Kent Wagner	Horse Shoe Trail Conservancy
Karen Phillips	LCRDC	Miranda Wade	Equestrian Trails
Trish St. Georges	East Nantmeal Twp & Land Trust	Kim Dunn	East Pikeland Twp Trail Committee
Cathie Whitlock	So. Coventry Twp Park & Rec Board Chairperson	Katharine Trolier	West Vincent Twp Sustainability Task Force
Brian Wilde	Parks & Trails	Jaime Wade	Sheeder Mill Farm
Penny Fulton	West Vincent Sustainability Task Force	John Mikowychok	Chester County parks & recreation department
Davida Waters	LCRDC & Fr. Creek State Park Trail Crew	Adrienne Boyance	West Vincent Multi-Use Trails
Suzanne Nastase	West Vincent Twp. Park & Recreation Board	George Martin	Multi-Use Trails (WVT resident)
Owen Prusack	Warwick County Park	Pam Brown	French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust
Judy Thomas	Chester County Department of Open Space Preservation	Lisa Lacroix	West Pikeland Township Parks & Recreation
Nancy Carirille	West Whiteland Twp.	Kim Damsgaard	West Vincent Twp. PC and STF
Dave Stauffer	Chester County	Jonathan Gay	East Pikeland Historical Commission, HARB, Trail Sub-Committee
Ben James	West Vincent Twp Sustainability Task Force	Jake Michael	Chester County Planning Commission
Bob Folwell	Schuylkill River Greenway Association	Karen Nocella	Chair, East Coventry P&R & Northern Federation, LCRDC
Charles Jacob	Warwick Township Board of Supervisors, Northern Federation	Harriet Stone	West Vincent Twp Open Space Committee and EAC; Green Valleys Association
Sara Shick	West Vincent Twp Planning Commission; Park & recreation Board	An additional 14 participants did not sign in.	
Planning Team		Ann Toole	Toole Recreation Planning

## **Agenda**

1. Welcome and Introductions - Ann Toole presented information about the project planning team and the Northern Chester County Federation consultant selection process.
2. About the Plan – Ann Toole presented a plan overview with respect to a major focus on trails.
3. A Few Statistics on Trails in the Northern Federation Region - Ann Toole presented statistics prepared by Michelle Brummer on trail status in Northern Chester County.
4. Forum Discussion – Participants engaged in a discussion about the challenges and opportunities regarding trails, trail planning and trail development in Northern Chester County.

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Map Exercise. For items five and six, participants reviewed the Trail Map, providing their notes and marking it up to add information and provide recommendations for revisions.

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5. Trail Development Progress
  - Paths
  - Trailheads and parking
  - Amenities
6. Critical Additions
  - Key linkages and loops not yet proposed as public trails
  - Trails as outdoor experiences
7. One Important Thing the Plan Could Do

## **Discussion Results**

### **Critical Issues About Trails**

- Hunting on state owned lands precludes trail use. Questions were raised about the closure of state game lands trails emanating from state game lands in Lancaster County. Ingrid Cantarella of the Horse Shoe Trail Club provided information on how that policy is changing. The Horse Shoe Trail was grandfathered and not affected by the Game Commission regulations. It has always been open.
- Multi use trails need accommodations for horses.
- Running trails desired. Preferred surface is wood or gravel, not asphalt. Trail running is becoming an activity of interest.
- Horse parking including trailers is needed. Horse friendly parking needed. Welkenwier does offer horse trailer parking. Good to call ahead to make sure it is available and that no special

events are going on.

- Public education about trail use is critically needed. Courtesy among trail users is vital. Desired goal is for the hierarchy of trail use to be observed: wheels → feet → hooves (horses yield to pedestrians who yield to strollers and bikes)
- Use common sense: don't ride when trails are muddy. Keep off wet grass. Use on muddy surfaces damages them for future use.
- Suggestion: Look into providing mounting blocks along horse trails. This would facilitate riders dismounting to clean up after their horses. Suggested distance was a block or boulder every half mile (Note: Look into this to establish a standard.) Some thought that was too far apart.
- Accurate records and monitoring is needed for easements. Easements have been lost that were essential trail segments. Adjoining property owners took over the eased properties in some areas; others were lost through lack of maintenance. (Chester Co wanted us to be sure that we knew this doesn't happen with their easements; they monitor and maintain.)
- The area includes many trails on privately owned property that are used by local residents. These trail segments are provided by the owners through their own good will. Trail club members described their outreach efforts to show appreciation and gratitude in a formal way annually. The recognition includes a personal visit, expression of thanks and the presentation of a gift such as a home baked pie, a birdhouse, birdseed and other thoughtful items. Property owners in the forum stated how they like to have this type of trail use on their properties and as horse riders themselves value these trails. There is no desire to advertise the trails but to continue their use through good will. Discussion included the potential for having discussion with willing landowners about the potential for easements on these trail segments. The turnover of property from landowners willing to accommodate trail use to future property owners who may close their land to trail use is of concern. (You might get clarification from Lisa or Karen on this too; I haven't heard anything like that in our area—except that the fox hunting clubs do thank you gifts (we get a turkey at Thanksgiving).
- Bicycle speeding is prevalent and dangerous, especially on the Schuylkill River Trail. How can speed limits be established and enforced?
- A hierarchy of trails needs to be incorporated into a regional trail system: in parks, loops, on-road, off-road, destination and long-distance and local commuting. Include recreational, fitness and transportation as uses. Include range of users from those learning to ride to expert cyclists.
- Evaluate/improve road shoulders for accommodating cyclist and pedestrians.
- Keep trail chip areas for horses (Streubel Trail as an example)
- Find appropriate areas for mountain bikers. Various participants provided a range of perceptions and experiences about the effect of cyclists on horses ranging from no effect at all to dangerous close calls.
- ATV use is evident in the area and a problem. The plan is dealing with non-motorized trail use only. Enforcement of ATV's is an issue that needs to be dealt with at the local level.
- Safety issues such as adequate sight lines required on multi-use trails needs consideration.
- Restricting the use of horses on trails was raised as a concern. There appears to be a need for information about trail construction and improvements in trails. Public perception about trail

improvements in Chester County appears to be different from what is actually happening in the southern end of the county or in the Downingtown area.

- West Vincent Land Trust is working on eased trails on pipelines. The organization has already made some calls about this and it appears that creating trails on pipelines has potential.

## **Outreach**

Based upon a resounding theme of the need for education on a host of topics, the participants explored ways to do outreach.

- Trail riders talking with other trail users.
- Peer-to-Peer – when there is a problem or issue with a particular trail, organize trail users to undertake a positive, organized, friendly outreach to inform trail users about issues and to enlist their support in taking corrective action as well as in getting the word out to make the trail work well for everyone.
- Signage – The topic of signage emerged as a critical need. A regional signage system needs to be planned, installed and maintained. A regional identify system appeared to be important.
- Have trashcans / waste receptacles. (Note: explore pack it in- pack it out policy)
- Talk to the hunts about how to enlist their outreach support. They know everybody and use much of the region for their sport.
- Educate landowners about liability especially to educate them about the methods of protection through the state Recreational Use of Land and Water Act.
- Use township newsletters to feature articles on education and outreach. Newsletters are read extensively and residents value them.
- Communicate through all open space, recreation and other related township committees.
- Communicate through trail clubs and committees.
- Explore “Adopt-A-Trail” and Trail Watch programs.
- Have theme days and events such as Historic Trails Days.
- Unite trail and historic and heritage events and facilities.
- Develop a welcome strategy for newcomers that fosters an identity of living in Northern Chester County as a special place.
- Education was mentioned numerous times with specific suggestions that broadly ranged including things like informing people how to act around horses, trail users talking to the horses, trail projects to newcomer socials and materials, trail etiquette, private property rights, and respect for property owners.
- Should there be some type of umbrella organization or mechanism for trail use groups?

## **One Important Thing the Plan Can Do**

- Build rapport with private landowners for public access for trail use.
- Wide shoulder for cyclists on Pughtown Road from Rt 113 to Rt 23.
- Provide trails from residential developments to parks, commercial centers, schools and other destinations.

- Connect to the Trenton Cutoff.
- Provide something for everyone with respect to a range of trail types.
- All townships should connect via a regional trail system – not just trail within single municipal boundaries.
- Provide maps on the Internet – not paper maps. Let trail users print out their own maps. Keep the Internet maps up-to-date.
- No trespassing enforcement is key.
- Notify people when trail maintenance projects are underway – people would like to join in but just do not know about the opportunities.
- Provide trails as an alternative transportation mode.
- Provide share the road signs.
- A most important point: There is a major difference between trail planning and trail construction. Trails that can actually get built need to be built. Certain trail projects have the property ownership or easement, design, construction documents, funding, political will and citizens' support (maybe even a partnering group for trail maintenance and management). While other trails might look good on paper, they may not have the elements necessary to actually get built. Trails that can be built should become the priority. The plan needs to be focused on that in order to be competitive for grant funding. Some trails can theoretically be more important or make more sense on paper but if they can't get built, it is more important to move on to the trails that can actually get built. Successful trails will create the momentum for more trail development.
- Participants from municipalities further south in Chester County (Wallace/Whitelands, maybe as far south as East Brandywine) expressed interest in a similar regional trail planning effort in their area. All communities have an open space plan just as those in the northern portion of the county so the other municipalities could potentially join forces to undertake regional planning if that would work for them.