

The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc.
CHC- TRAILS ALERT - UPDATE January 11, 2007

DEP Has Heard Equestrians

This update follows the CHC Trails Alert posted January 4th 2007 regarding the DEP public hearing on horses on trails in the state forest & parks.

CHC has been negotiating a resolution with the DEP regarding the proposed regulations which specify that "Trails are open unless posted closed to hiking, mountain biking, or other types of trail related activities. **Horseback riding is prohibited on trails unless posted as permitted**. Use of any trail, road or path posted as closed by the DEP is prohibited".

The DEP has received a great deal of feedback from the equestrian community, and **comments will continue to be accepted until February 13th 2007**.

However, we have been made aware that the DEP is willing to look at revising the proposed regulations based on the comments they receive. Any revisions that take place will be done after the public hearing & comment period.

We are pleased that DEP is willing to collaborate with horse enthusiasts on this very important issue. We would also like to thank those who submitted their comments, and thank everyone who is going to attend the hearing, or is planning on submitting comments within the specified timeframe. The overwhelming response that has been received so far is an example of the strength of the horse industry in Connecticut. Equestrians have made their voices heard!

Additionally, Representative Debra Lee Hovey (R-112th) has met with Commissioner McCarthy and DEP officials. Representative Hovey is working with the DEP in order to come to an agreement to protect the interests of equestrians in the state forests and parks. CHC would like to sincerely thank Representative Hovey for her efforts on behalf of our equine community.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY NEEDED FROM EQUESTRIANS: You may still submit your written or emailed comments to the following address: Pamela Aey Adams, Director, State Parks Division, Department of Environmental Protection, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106. or via email to: Pamela.Adams@po.state.ct.us If sending via email, please put "**Trails Regulations**" in the subject title. **Please remember to give your full name and address when submitting comments.**

You may still attend the **public hearing on February 5th**, however, due to limited seating capacity, it is preferable that you submit written comments, or only send one or two representatives from your organization. You should still **urge DEP to align horses with other user groups, and allow access to all trails except where posted as prohibited**. Also, phone calls and e-mails to your legislators or the Regulation Review Committee are not necessary at this time.

We need your continued support for the following DEP-CHC statewide Project:

It should also be noted that CHC is undertaking a **statewide** project to catalogue all the trails in Connecticut that may be accessible to horses. We will need assistance with collecting this information. The end result of this project will be to have numerous "official" trails available to us, provided that the equestrian community commits to maintain them. If you can assist, please contact Diane Ciano. CHC is currently meeting with forest supervisors as well as other user groups to obtain this information, and it will be of great importance in our fight to keep trails open to horses.

If you have questions, please contact CHC trails chair, Diane Ciano at Spirit76@snet.net or CHC President Amy Stegall at Stegall@snet.net (860) 684-6583. You may also visit the CHC website for updates www.cthorsecouncil.org A copy of the proposed regulations are available on our website, along with directions to the public hearing.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! UNITED WE RIDE & DRIVE !