

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cape Elizabeth Conservation Commission
FROM: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner
DATE: November 8, 2011
SUBJECT: Horseback riding on Greenbelt Trails

It has been brought to my attention that horseback riding has been occurring on greenbelt trail boardwalks that have not been built to support the weight of horses. In an effort to begin a discussion, Councilor Jessica Sullivan reached out to stable owners.

A meeting was held in Town Hall on September 28th, led by Councilor Sullivan, and well attended (See below).

The meeting began with an overview of the trail system and the boardwalks and bridges built by volunteers. It was noted that the boardwalks can support one snowmobile and 1 rider, but that a horse can be much heavier than a snowmobile and also distributes weight differently. The existing boardwalks are getting damaged by horseback riders and the safety of horses and riders is in question.

Attendees suggested that they do not use all the greenbelt trails, but mainly the trails in Gull Crest. They may be able to identify the trails they use and perhaps the Conservation Commission could consider a more rigorous boardwalk standard for just these areas. An attendee further offered that she is aware of a grant program specifically funding replacing bridges to support horses.

The horseback riding group agreed to provide information and to attend a meeting of the Conservation Commission to discuss this further. This information is attached. Attendees also offered to contribute volunteer labor to this effort.

Attendees:

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