



Staff Report – September 7, 2007

California Equestrian Trails & Lands Coalition (CET&LC) – Safety Considerations and Generic Safety Guidelines for Multi-Use Trails

1) Staff Recommendations;

- That the “***Safety Considerations for Multi-Use Trails***” and the “***Generic Safety Guidelines for Multi-Use Trails***” drafted by the CET & LC be used as guiding information for the development of comprehensive multi-use trail guidelines by California State Parks.
- Development of comprehensive and objective multi-use guidelines, should include the following elements in an objective and measurable format; 1) Design, 2) Safety, 3) Sustainability, 4) Education and 5) Enforcement.

2) Background

Over the past several years issues relating to trail conflicts on trails allowing multiple user groups on the same trail tread have been discussed prompting the creation of a few guidelines of varying formats to be generated. In past meetings of the CRTC members have commented that some form of guidelines to assist land managers and trail users should be created. This Staff Report addresses some of the issues related to trail use and design guidelines and analyses one set of guidelines generated by the Equestrian Trails and Lands Coalition.

The Conflict Resolution Sub-committee of the CRTC has requested that adopting the CET&LC guidelines be placed on the agenda for action at the September 7, 2007 public meeting. This Staff Report is intended to clarify past committee discussions and provide some clarity and direction towards the development of comprehensive multi-use guidelines.

The “*Safety Considerations for Multi-Use Trails*” and the “*Generic Safety Guidelines for Multi-Use Trails*” were adopted by the CET&LC in June of 2005 and presented to the Director and executive staff of California State Parks that same year. The objective of the Equestrian Trails and Lands Coalition, according to their web site, is “To develop an Equestrian Trails and Lands Coalition among concerned California organizations for the purpose of protecting our mutual interests in the preservation and use of trails, public and private land uses, and to inform and to educate Public Agencies, Legislators and the general public about equestrian recreation issues.”

3) Previous Committee Discussions

May 2006 Public Meeting

- Chair Gillen advised communication and education continue to be the essential themes for promoting safety on multi-use trails. Toby Horst (California Equestrian Trails & Land Coalition) was commended for his effort in drafting guidelines. Jeannie is seeking input on the guidelines, cautioning folks that recommendations and CSP staffs' ability to implement recommendations need to be considered.
- Chair Gillen recommended that land managers utilize the East Bay Regional Parks trails management and standards in examining safety standards.
- Jim Townsend (Trails Development Program Manager, EBRP) – "Trails Check List was developed for converting existing trails to multi-use (including dog access). Check List process for evaluating proposed changes to existing changes to make multi-use. It's not a set of design standards, not an empirical process. They are guidelines and a suggested approach, but are not the end all to be all solution."

August 2006 Public Meeting

- Chair Gillen commented that the East Bay Regional Park's (EBRP) document entitled "Technical Analysis of Proposed Changes in a Trail's Uses (checklist)" is a very good process tool for multi-use conversions.
- Steve Musillami stated that this type of checklist could be adapted to work with the Department's Trail Policy process.
- John Mercurio stated that the above mentioned checklist was developed by EBRP to assess the appropriateness of mountain bike use on single track trails.

May 2007 Public Meeting

- Jeanne Gillen mentioned that she and Greg Gandrud (sub-committee member) would like the topic of conversion guidelines for multi-use trails be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Jeannie also stated that the CRTC would work on potential guidelines and provide something more tangible at the next meeting.

4) Committee Role

According to PRC 5074, "The committee shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) Coordinate trail planning and development among cities, counties, and districts. In carrying out this responsibility, the committee shall review records of easements and other interests in lands which are available for recreational trail usage, including public lands, utility easements, other rights-of-way, gifts, or surplus public lands which may be adaptable for such use, and shall advise the director in the development of standards for trail construction so that uniform construction standards may be available to cities, counties, and districts.

(b) Advise the director in the preparation and maintenance of the plan.

(c) Study the problems and opportunities presented by the use of private property for recreational trail use and advise the director on measures to mitigate undesirable aspects of such usage."

5) Department Role

The Department's role in the development of trail multi-use assessment tools is to gather input from different sources including users, other land managers and trail advocacy organizations, analyze this with the trail use and construction knowledge of the Department and prepare tools for the Department to manage multi-use on trails within the California State Park System. The role of the Statewide Trails Section is to support the CRTC in it's designated role and duties.

6) Analysis

Safety on trails is related to etiquette and the "*Safety Considerations for Multi-Use Trails*" and the "*Generic Safety Guidelines for Multi-Use Trails*" developed and adopted by the CET&LC addresses these issues well primarily from the viewpoint of mountain bike and horse users. Guidelines for assessing the appropriate addition of more than one trail user type to an existing trail or the design and designation for multiple user groups to a new trail should assess many issues in addition to safety. There is very little information relating to other critical elements of trail use assessment included in these "CET&LC Considerations / Guidelines" to assist land managers with assessments and construction. The subject "CET&LC Considerations / Guidelines" do outline some of the major components that should be included in subjective guidelines; 1) Design, 2) Safety, 3) Sustainability, 3) Education and 4) Enforcement however much of the information is very informative yet most is anecdotal.