



Newsletter
July 2021
Issue 2021-4

Protection of Confederation Trail Follow-up Edition

Note to the Members of Island Trails

As referred to in our last newsletter, the Government of Prince Edward Island had been approached by the PEI Trail Riders with a proposal for a Pilot Program which would enable horses to ride on the main trail bed of three 15 kilometre sections of the Confederation Trail. The proposed sections are from O'Leary to Murray Road on the Main Line; Emerald to Freetown on the Main Line; and Georgetown Road to Selkirk Road Rte. 23 on the Murray Harbour Line.

At our meeting with the Deputy Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure we were asked for our views on this proposal. As we had a copy of the proposal we were able to go through it in detail and pointed out that we felt the proposal was short-sighted, bad for cyclists and walkers on the trail, not at all safe due to the interaction of dogs, walkers, cyclists, and horses on the trail, and will inevitably lead to poor outcomes.

We then found out we were not really at the meeting to discuss the merits or shortcomings of the proposal. Rather it was to inform us the pilot was going to go ahead beginning on 15 August 2021 and would last 90 days.

In the original proposal we read that the PEI Trailriders would be in charge of evaluating the success of the pilot and we expressed serious misgivings about this process. We were reassured this was not the case and it would be Transportation and Infrastructure who would carry out the evaluation. However, when asked what the criteria are for judging the pilot's success or failure, we were told the criteria were forthcoming. We understood this to mean that they had not yet been written.

There is also a detailed and necessary educational component that comes with a project such as this and we are not convinced it has been thought through. Most Islanders and visitors are not familiar with the etiquette involved when encountering a horse on a trail and we are not convinced three weeks time is sufficient to educate the public. When we asked about this, we were told there is a communications team and they would deal with it.

So this is where we are. We have a 'Pilot Project' but we don't know the criteria upon which it will be judged. There is an educational and communications component but it has not yet been released. We have also been unsuccessful in determining who approved this project. The entire process has been opaque and the meeting we had simply told us what had already been decided. It was in no way a discussion. It all seems rushed and rather slap-dash and does not ensure confidence.

We do have a request to ask of you, our members. If you are on any part of the Confederation Trail affected by the pilot in the coming weeks and months, and you encounter a horse or horses, please let us know how it went - both good and bad. As well, if you see trail damage or horse manure on the trail, please identify the location, date, time and take a picture if possible. Location can be the distance marker on the trail, a cross road, or a GPS plot. The more detail the better! Also, please let us know if you see increased ATV activity. With gates left open for horses, this is a definite possibility.

We will be letting the government and media know what we think in the days ahead. Below are some useful e-mail addresses for your use should you wish to let the Premier, Minister of Transportation, your local MLA, or your local newspaper know what you think.

Thank you,

Mike Salter
President, Island Trails

- Premier Dennis King - premier@gov.pe.ca
- Hon James Aylward,
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure - jsjaylwardMinister@gov.pe.ca
- MLA Trish Altass - pdaltassMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- MLA Michele Beaton - mlbeatonMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Hannah Bell - hebellmla@assembly.pe.ca
- Zack Bell - zbellmla@assembly.pe.ca
- Karla Bernard - kbernardMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Peter Bevan-Baker - psbevanbakermila@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Darlene Compton - dcomptonmla@assembly.pe.ca
- Cory Deagle - cfdeaglemla@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Jamie Fox - jdfoxmla@assembly.pe.ca
- Sonny Gallant - sjgallantMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Ole Hammarlund - ohammarlundMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Robert Henderson - rlhendersonMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Stephen Howard - sphowardMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Ernie Hudson - ehhudsonMinister@gov.pe.ca
- Hon. Natalie Jameson - ngjamesonmla@assembly.pe.ca
- Lynne Lund - lglundMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Heath MacDonald - hmacdonaldMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Sidney MacEwen - smacewenmla@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Matthew MacKay - MinisterEGTC@gov.pe.ca
- Gordon MacNeilly - gamcneillyMLA@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Steven Myers - samyers@assembly.pe.ca
- Hal Perry - jhperrymla@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Bloyce Thompson - bgthompsonmla@assembly.pe.ca
- Hon. Brad Trivers - bgtriversmla@assembly.pe.ca

- The Guardian Newspaper - letters@theguardian.pe.ca
- The Eastern Graphic Newspaper - editor@peicanada.com
- The West Prince Graphic Newspaper - melissa@peicanada.com
- The Journal Pioneer Newspaper - srundle@journalpioneer.com