



# Biannual Newsletter

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April 8, 2014  
Issue 1

**From the editor:**

This is our first ZBE newsletter and will be published twice a year. It will cover upcoming events, projects projected and completed. Each issue will have human interest items. This issue has the history of Zumbro Bottoms compliments of Ken Olson and an article from Barb and Lee Partington.

Steve Freese

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## Zumbro Bottoms: How did we get here?

The first efforts by the DNR to purchase land in what is now the Zumbro Bottoms unit of the Richard Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest were in the very early 1960s. Conservation officer Willis Kruger approached the land owner in the area of what is now known as Paddy's hill to purchase the 240 acres he owned. In 1938 there were 17 buildings in existence at the sharp left turn as you go up the hill. He offered \$1 to purchase a 1 year option to purchase the 240 acres for \$1200. The DNR was unable to come up with the money that year so it was extended another year for another \$1. Still there was no money to purchase the land so a third year option was secured. During the third year another buyer came forward and the DNR let the landowner out of the contract so the land was sold. The purchaser acquired most of the land during the next decade with plans for dude ranch.

The DNR was able to purchase 400 acres around the west assembly area and prevented the dude ranch plan from being completed. A deal was made to purchase the land now defined as the Zumbro Bottoms in 1977. The use of the Zumbro Bottoms was largely uncontrolled initially with little conflict as a result of low numbers of users at any one time.

In 1982 a Sub-Unit plan for the Richard Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest-Wabasha County portion was completed as part of a state mandated study. It included Kruger, Snake Creek, Trout Valley, and Zumbro Bottoms.

## Inside this issue:

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# ZUMBRO BOTTOMS MANAGEMENT UNIT

Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest Recreation Sub  
-Area Plans Wabasha County, August 1983.

The bulk of the land in the Zumbro Bottoms Management Unit was acquired in 1977. Because of the requirements of the Outdoor Recreation Act, no development other than that done by volunteer groups has been accomplished to date. Various horseback riding groups have taken a great interest in this area and are willing to invest their time and money assisting the state in its development.

The old bridge which crosses the Zumbro River within this unit has deteriorated. Engineering studies are necessary to determine if the bridge's superstructure will bear heavy enough loads to make redecking feasible. If the structure is found to be unsound the cost of building a new bridge would be prohibitive. While not absolutely essential to the recreation use of the Zumbro Bottoms Management Unit, the bridge conveniently ties the north and south portions of this unit.

The only existing recreational facility in the Zumbro Bottoms Unit is a canoe landing near the bridge on the Zumbro River. Existing hill and field roads are presently being used as a trail system mainly for snowmobiling and horseback riding. The Zumbro Bottoms Unit is used heavily for deer and grouse hunting in the fall and for turkey hunting in the spring. Fishing is available in the Zumbro River which bisects the Unit.

## Existing Recreational Facilities

### Access

- canoe launching and landing area

## Proposed Renovation and Development

Cost estimates are in 1983 dollars.

### Access

This access serves the Zumbro River, a state canoe & boating routes river. Signs identifying this access from the river are lacking.

### Proposed Actions

1. Place signs for user convenience upstream from access.

### Estimated

#### Cost

See Sign section

### Trails

Although no trails have been officially designated in the Zumbro Bottoms Management Unit, field and hill roads provide a basic trail system. For winter use the Zumbro Bottoms Area provides an ideal setting for snowmobile trails. During the summer the Zumbro Bottom Unit *provides* excellent opportunities for horseback riding and hiking. Levels of use are not expected to cause conflicts. Use will be monitored, however, and appropriate action taken if the uses become incompatible. No motorized summer use will be allowed on the Zumbro Bottoms Management Unit's summer trails because of the high potential for conflict with other uses. Horseback *riders* have expressed interest in connecting the Zumbro Bottoms Unit to the Kruger Unit with a trail. *If this connection* is desired, horseback clubs should work with private landowners to secure a legal right-of-way.

Proposed Actions	Estimated Cost
1. Monitor trail-use and take appropriate action if conflicts arise.	\$ 1,000
2. Develop an 14 mile snowmobile (winter) horseback and hiking (summer) trail system.	\$15,000
3. Provide connections for multi-purpose trails to county grants-in-aid snowmobile trails.	0
TOTAL	\$16,000

### Walk-In Campsites

The topography and vistas available at Zumbro Bottoms provide an excellent opportunity for the development of low cost walk-in campsites. Only three should be developed initially so that demand can be analyzed.

Proposed Actions	Estimated cost
1. Develop three single unit walk-in campsites with fire rings, picnic tables and open air toilets.	\$ 1,500
TOTAL	\$ 1,500

### Parking Area

Parking areas are necessary to allow user access to the Zumbro Bottoms Management Unit. Five small parking lots located to provide convenient access for trail users and hunters would disperse use and maximize enjoyment of the unit's land base. An easement from a private owner is necessary for one of these lots because of location. One larger (8 to 10 vehicle) parking lot is necessary to accommodate the vehicles and trailers of horseback riders. In conjunction with this larger lot an open grassy area for vehicles and trailers should be developed in an existing field to serve the parking and camping needs of organized horseback trail rides. Vault toilets should be provided for user convenience at the horseback lot and the lot nearest the public access.

Proposed Actions	Estimated Cost
1. Construct five parking lots for 3 to 6 cars each	\$3,000
2. Secure easement for one of the small parking lots from adjacent landowner	\$1,000
3. Construct one parking lot (8 to 10 vehicles and horse trailers).	\$1,500
4. Develop grassy area for parking and camping convenience of those participating in large organized trail rides.	\$2,000
5. Develop 2 vault toilets at horseback riders lot and at lot near public access.	<u>\$6,000</u>
TOTAL	\$13,500

## Roads

Roads in this unit are in a deteriorated condition and need repair. These roads are necessary for recreational user conveyance.

Proposed Actions	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Repair existing roads (this project is necessary for recreational use of the unit).	<u>\$10,000</u>
TOTAL	\$10,000

## Bridge

The bridge at Funk Ford on the Zumbro River has deteriorated and should be redecked or closed for user safety. A decision concerning the bridge is pending the results of an engineering study to determine structural integrity. If it is feasible to redeck the bridge, the cost of repair will also be taken into account before a final decision is made. If the bridge is not redecked, a ford across the Zumbro River should be provided in association with the development of the horseback trail.

Proposed Actions	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Complete engineering study of bridge.	In progress pending outcome of engineering study
2. Repair bridge if structurally stable and cost effective.	
3. Construct ford of Zumbro River if bridge is not repaired (in association with horse trail development).	

## Horse Watering Area

An area is necessary for watering horses. A well at the old building site adjacent to the proposed horse parking lot and open field area can be converted for this purpose. This well does not meet Minnesota Department of Health standards for human consumption, however, and must be signed notifying the public.

Proposed Actions	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Develop watering area at old well site.	<u>\$ 1,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,000

## Signs

Proper signing of an area is necessary for users' convenience and safety. The Zumbro Bottoms Management Unit is not properly signed at present. Proper signs are detailed in the DNR sign manual.

Proposed Actions	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Properly sign all use areas and trails.	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
2. Provide "you are here" at all trailheads.	<u>500</u>
TOTAL	\$ 3,000

## Incompatible Development

Unused old buildings in section 27 near the proposed parking lot and a hole containing an unused pressure tank near the public access are a hazard to users and should be removed.

Proposed Actions	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Dispose of unused old buildings near proposed parking lot in section 27.	\$ 500
2. Fill hole and bury pressure tank near public access.	<u>300</u>
TOTAL	\$800

Zumbro Bottoms Management Unit Total Estimated Costs for Recreation Related Development:

Grand Total \$45,800\*

\*Figure does not include bridge redecking costs (see text)

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Greetings,

Lee and I live in rural Lake City, in southeast Minnesota. I have been a horseback rider for 18 years, trail riding is my favorite past time. My husband, Lee, was a city boy. Introduced to horses and country life when he met me. On our 2<sup>nd</sup> date he was on a horse. His wedding gift was a Tennessee Walker mare, Brandy. She has been a great trail horse for him, calm and oh so smooth!! She is a great ride. With a few lessons, Lee has become a good rider. He is always willing to take the “trail less traveled”. We have a lot of fun together.



Our farm family has grown over the years. It is now at 4 gaited horses, 1 pony, 18 chickens, 7 ducks, 1 dog and 3 cats. Hate to get any more animals, it makes it more difficult to leave for more than a couple of days.

We are very fortunate to live only 25 miles from Zumbro Bottoms and 10 miles from Hay Creek. In the summer, friends and family know not to call us on the weekends....we are usually out riding where phones don't have service. Zumbro Bottoms is my favorite place to ride. It is a special place!! The goal to preserve Zumbro Bottoms for our grandchildren to ride horses, prompted the start of the Zumbro Bottoms Equestrians group. As a group, we will have more voice than an individual. We would like to see this group grow and be ambassadors of “The Bottoms” and for that matter all horse parks.

Lee and I were Zumbro Bottoms camp hosts at Frostbite ride last October. This was our first time ever being camp host for anything. It was a learning experience. Lee was in his element. There are many people who also love and enjoy “The Bottoms”. I was pleasantly surprised that most campers paid their camping fees and cleaned up after their horses. Many expressed interest in joining the Zumbro Bottoms Equestrians group.

Jenny Dehn, Frontenac Park Supervisor, is in charge of the Zumbro Bottoms campgrounds. Craig Bloomer, SE Minnesota Parks and Trails Supervisor, is in charge of the trails. In November, Mark Fitting, Lee and I had a meeting with them. Lots of good discussion. Discussed trails, expanding trails, maintaining trails, mapping single track trails, signage on trails, water at central.....

One of the goals of the Parks and Trails is to map all the single track trails. The trails on the west side of the river have already been mapped. Our group volunteered to do the leg work to map the other side. We will work with Craig Bloomer to coordinate use of the GPS device.

In the discussion, we also learned that there is DNR owned land from Zumbro Bottoms all the way to Kruger Park. Craig Bloomer is going to research putting in a multi-use trail between the two. Wouldn't that be cool!!!

Happy Trails,

Barb Partington

ZBE Chair

## ZBE Directors meet with Frontenac State Park Supervisors

March 2014

Maintenance of the Zumbro Bottoms campgrounds in SE Minnesota is the responsibility of the Frontenac State Park Supervisor Jenny Dehn and Assistant Supervisor Caleb Jensen. In February ZBE directors, Barb Partington, Lee Partington and Mark Fitting met with Jenny and Caleb. Below is a highlight of the main discussion items.

- Central Campground – New well is scheduled for 2014. Well is being funded by Minnesota Trail Pass Money. (Yippee)
- West Campground – 2 new electric water spigots to be added. Plans are now at engineering. Scheduled for 2014
- West Campground - New Double Handicap Vault Toilet – will be installed in the pines, by the handicap site. Proposed for 2015
- Additional picnic tables and fire rings are being shuffled from the Frontenac State Park to the Zumbro Bottoms.
- Jenny has requested grant money from Minnesota Trail Riders Association to install 2 more manure bunkers at West Campground and install more high ties. The 2 additional manure bunkers will make it more efficient when park staff come to clean/empty them out.
- High line improvements
- The general operating funds have been cut. Staff are looking at cost saving options, cutting back on mowing/trimming is one possibility. These cuts mean that there is greater opportunity for volunteering.
- Looking for Campground Hosts – if interested please contact Jenny Dehn at Frontenac State Park [jennifer.dehn@state.mn.us](mailto:jennifer.dehn@state.mn.us)
- National Trails Work Day – 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in June. A few work projects were discussed, painting picnic shelter at Central, clean fire rings, pickup garbage, repair picnic tables

Barb Partington  
ZBE Chair



# New Tie Rail at Zumbro Bottoms

From Irv Parker – Minnesota Trail Riders Association Director

Published in the February 2014, MTRA newsletter

2013 Zumbro Bottoms Frostbite Ride – the last weekend in October

This is a new tie rail sponsored by the new Zumbro Bottoms Equestrians and jointly installed by them and the MTRA. A special thanks to Jim Reisinger for spear heading this project by getting the 4-inch pipe properly welded. The tie rail is located close to the well at the West Assembly Area. It is 40 inches high. The legs are buried 44 inches and packed with 10 bags of bagged concrete, tamped and leveled.





# **I'M WDNDRING .....WHAT THE RULES ARE WITH REGARD TO DDGS IN HDRSE CAMPS AND DN TRAILS?**

This is a topic that people seem to understand differently. I've been wondering myself as long as another MTRA member has asked, it seemed time to check into it further. There are at least 2 aspects to think about – legal and ethical/personal responsibility. I am certainly not a lawyer so if you need more details on the legal portion than I am trying to provide here as a lay person, please consult a law enforcement officer and/or attorney.

To research this question I contacted the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) because they have jurisdiction on the state lands many of us frequently ride. Grant Scholen (DNR) responded with helpful information. Thanks Grant! I also visited with Scott Moran, Conservation Officer in SE MN. I am going to try to capture the essence of my research and then offer some observations with regard to this question.

**The legal aspects of the question are embedded in Minnesota Rules.** “Minnesota Administrative Rules” are rules made through state agencies that have the ‘authority of law’ just like Statutes created by the legislature. There are 2 or 3 sections of MN Administrative Rule 6100 that speak to this topic.

Pets (dogs, cats, or other pets) must be personally attended at all times and effectively restrained by a portable enclosure or by a leash of no longer than 6 feet in all state parks, on state trails, and in state forest campgrounds or state forest day use areas. Service animals are an exception to this rule. (MN Rule 6100.1100 Pets.) I believe that all of these areas are usually signed as “public recreation areas”.

A second part of the rule (MN Rule 6100.3900 subp. 4 Pets) says “No persons shall allow any pet animal to be unrestrained or unattended except dogs used for hunting during legal hunting seasons in accordance with part 6100.3600. Such pets shall be restrained by a leash not exceeding six feet.” I believe that this applies to the public recreation areas previously mentioned.

A third part of the Rule (MN Rule 6100.0700) speaks to the conduct of people in these areas. These are much less clear as to how this applies to the pets belonging to people but it says persons shall not cause disturbances which could tend “to arouse alarm, anger, or resentment in others”. Could this apply to their pet(s)? I don't know.

Still another point to bring out here is that if a dog kills a deer in MN the owner is responsible to the State for restitution. The State does set a dollar value on a deer.

The way I read these rules they do not speak to the restraint of pets in state forests outside of designated camp and “public recreation areas”. This is where the pet owner's responsibility for the protection of wildlife and respect for other users comes in.

**Personal observations and thoughts** – I like dogs very much and we have 2 dogs who camp with us all of the time. For several years when I encountered trail riders accompanied by 1 or more dogs I thought that this was fine and had no problems with it. However, in the past 4 years I have had 3 bad experiences with dogs on trails and have changed my feelings about dogs on trails.

I have personally observed 1) a very experienced ‘trail’ dog chase wildlife and likely chase it to death, 2) two dogs on a group ride disturbing horses while riding and begging for food during lunch breaks, and 3) a dog disturbing a rider’s mount to the point that it spun around to strike out at the dog and threw the rider. (Other riders in the group thought the rider was going to get trampled but luckily they did not.) All riders know that there are horses that are very used to dogs but there are also horses that are not used to dogs and might react violently to them. We also know that even well trained and the best behaved dogs still have a wild instinct that can cause them to be uncontrollable in some circumstances.

I don’t know any riders or dog owners that would like to be held financially responsible for or know that their dog was responsible for harming wildlife or injuring a fellow rider while on the trail. My dogs have never gone on the trail with me and never will.

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I need topics for future next newsletters so keep sending your questions!

## Up Coming Events

As winter finally draws to a close, you're probably itching to load up and head out to your favorite riding spot. Would like to have a few events added to every ones calendar. Please plan on joining us!!

### MTRA "Ride with the DNR"

Friday, May 2, 2014 – Zumbro Bottoms West Assembly Area

Ride: 9:30 AM – please arrive by 9:00 to get acquainted and 'fitted' to your horse

Lunch: Following ride @ about 11:30 AM – Picnic Shelter (bring your own)

Meeting: following lunch @ about 12:15 PM – Picnic Shelter

### Horse Riders –

The 2014 "Ride with the DNR" sponsored by MTRA will be at Zumbro Bottoms Friday May 2, 2014. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit with the people who work with DNR administered riding areas all over the state. DNR staff, including the Commissioner, and other officials from St Paul and our region are being invited and we hope will arrange to attend.

To make this event be the hands-on activity that is a highlight of the work year for many of the DNR staff, we need equine (horses & mules) for our guests to ride and equestrian people to share their ideas about trails and camps. Irv Parker and myself are organizing and coordinating this event. Please consider bringing an 'extra mount' for our guests and attending the meeting to follow the ride. The MTRA Spring Round Up Ride is also planned for this same weekend at 'the Bottoms'.

More info contact Ken at [oakridgefarm@bevcomm.net](mailto:oakridgefarm@bevcomm.net) or 507-356-8686

Irv Parker at [irvparker2344@aol.com](mailto:irvparker2344@aol.com) or 651-460-2344

Ken Olson

MTRA Trail Development Committee

### National Trails Work Day – Zumbro Bottoms

Saturday June 7

Please join us for a day of some work and some play. Last couple of years, the work was done in time to go out for a ride.

Listed are some of the jobs done in past years.

Clean fire pits, trim trees in camp, paint picnic shelter, fix high-ties, spread gravel\wood chips on trails

More information Ken at [oakridgefarm@bevcomm.net](mailto:oakridgefarm@bevcomm.net) or 507-356-8686