



Annual Newsletter

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Chairman's Note

December, 2015

Hello all,

Zumbro Bottoms Equestrians group has now been in existence for over 2 years. And what a ride it has been!! Lee and I have volunteered to be camp hosts. It has been interesting. We have met some really good people. I am always amazed at the passion that fellow horseback riders have for Zumbro Bottoms. Many of them have been riding there for 20-30 years. It is cool hearing their stories!

One of the rules the DNR is enforcing this year is "Quiet time between 10:00 PM and 8:00 AM". Please respect fellow campers and turn generators off and keep radios volumes low. For those on CPAP machines, there is a DC converter option available. Many have used the converter successfully for years.

Last winter the ZBE group researched becoming a Back Country Horseman (BCH) group. After some research and discussion, we decided to hold off for now. This topic will come up again this year.

It has been a productive year for the ZBE group. A big Thank-you goes out to all who have volunteered their time and money on our work days.

Listed below are the 2015 ZBE organized events.

* April 18, 2015 - Our 1st annual April trash cleanup day with 13 volunteers working 115 hours.

* June 6, 2015 - National Trails Day Work Day - This day is a team effort between MTRA, Zumbro Bottoms Equestrian's and the DNR. We had a very productive day. 28 volunteers who worked a total 140 hours!

* ZBE ride with the DNR and Minnesota legislators. We were very pleased to have representation with Chad Gelner, DNR Forestry and Caleb Jensen, Nadine Meyer and Seth Kaduce, Frontenac State Park. Matt Schmitt, District 21 state senator, also made time in his busy schedule to attend.

Next year we plan on adding another day to the April trash cleanup weekend and an additional work day in August. Please join us!!

Trash Cleanup Day
Saturday, April 18, 2015

This was our 1st Annual ZBE trash cleanup day. Mother Nature cooperated and we had beautiful weather.

Craig Bloomer, DNR Parks and Trails supervisor issued us a special use permit for the weekend. Thank-you Craig!! The special use permit allows us to have horses and motorized vehicles (tractor) on the trails. In respect to the turkey hunters, we did not leave the camp until after noon. Volunteers picked up trash around the west campground and the nearby trails. Others brought horses and headed across the river to pick up cans/bottles on remote trails. We strategically deposited the trash bags in vehicle accessible locations.

DNR staff picked the bags up the next week.

After an afternoon of picking up the smaller items, it was decided bigger equipment would be needed.

Barry Saylor volunteered to bring down his small tractor on the following Tuesday. Barry along with several others spent another 7 hours getting refrigerators, tires and miscellaneous junk gathered into a pile. A big thank-you Barry!

Thanks to all volunteers!

The 13 volunteers worked 115 hours!

ZBE ride with DNR and State Legislature
June 5, 2015

On the 1st Friday in June, ZBE sponsored a horseback trail ride with the DNR entities that manage Zumbro Bottoms and the local state representatives. This event gave the DNR staff and state legislators the opportunity to learn first-hand about the horse trails and the campgrounds at Zumbro Bottoms. We were very pleased to have DNR representation from forestry, Chad Gelner and Frontenac State Park – Caleb Jensen, Nadine Meyer and Seth Kaduce. Matt Schmitt, District 21 state senator, also made time in his busy schedule to attend.

Being involved with ZBE has been a learning curve for our entire group. It can be quite confusing on which DNR entity does what. Zumbro Bottoms is managed by 3 separate DNR departments.

- * Trails are managed by DNR Parks and Trails
- * The campgrounds are managed by Frontenac State Park
- * The forest is managed by DNR Forestry

After the ride we had a short meeting. The attending DNR staff explained their role in the management of the campgrounds and forest.

In talking to our guests, all found value and enjoyment in the ride. We are very fortunate to have them.

Meet Chad Gelner – Forester – Minnesota DNR

Share a little about yourself – where you grew up, where you went to school, where you live, kids/family

I grew up in Central Iowa in the heart of the corn belt. From a young age I took an interest in the outdoors and in particular, trees. After getting a forestry degree from Iowa State University I started as a forester with the MN DNR in 2004. I am married to my wife Jill and have 3 kids; Luke (8yrs), Hannah (5 yrs), and Seth (3 yrs). We live in Plainview, MN.

What is your favorite hobby or hobbies?

I love to do all of the normal sorts of outdoor activities like fishing, hiking, and camping. But my real interest is in trees. I consider myself a backyard hobby orchardist, and an amateur tree grafter. On my 1 acre city lot I manage 15 chestnut trees of all varieties, 2 plum trees, 2 apple trees, 13 pawpaw trees, 2 pear trees, 1 persimmon tree, 3 apricot trees, 1 cherry tree, and a few other miscellaneous trees. I've been experimenting with tree grafting and over the years I have made around 50 successful grafts on my yard trees. I've got one apple tree that currently has 29 genetically different varieties growing on one tree. It's more for fun than for practicality.

What is your job/position within the Minnesota DNR?

As a forester with the DNR I am stationed out of the Lake City office. My main duties are to manage the State Forest Lands in Wabasha and Goodhue Counties. This includes the Zumbro Bottoms Unit, Snake Creek Unit, Hay Creek Unit, part of Trout Valley Unit, Kruger Unit, and many other smaller tracts. The main objective in these units is to sustainably manage the forest in perpetuity while considering all economic and environmental factors. Even though timber management is our main goal and timber harvesting is one of our main management tools we manage these State Forest Lands for multiple uses including any number of recreational uses (birding, hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, motorized trail riding...)



What is the meaning of the colored ribbons and paint on the trees in certain areas at Zumbro Bottoms?

When we set up timber harvests we use different colored paints on the trees for different reasons. We generally stick to this standard color key on our timber sales; Blue painted trees mark the boundary of the particular sale area. Blue is a common color for you to see while horseback riding because trails often make a good boundary for our sales. Red painted trees indicate an approximate property line with an adjacent landowner. Yellow and Orange are usually used to mark trees that will be cut and removed by the logger.

What are the positives on tree harvesting and clear cutting?

There are many benefits to harvesting timber. As I said before, for us harvesting is a tool we use to manage the forest. If we don't manage the forest it will continue to change through the process of succession. One of the major components in our forests in SE Minnesota are the oaks and we have decided that oak forests are so important to us that we want to keep them on the landscape for a very long time. In order for that to happen we have to manage for oaks. If we don't manage for oaks the forest will continue to change and over time new plants will take their place. For proper regeneration oak trees naturally rely on disturbances such as wind storms or forest fires. Oaks require a lot of sunlight and therefore when the forest canopy is opened up by a fire or a wind storm, acorns are ready to take advantage of all of that sunlight. If disturbances don't occur shade-tolerant species will take advantage of the lack of sunlight and start to phase out the oak trees. Timber harvesting mimics a natural disturbance in that it opens up the canopy and allows us to regenerate oak trees. Don't let anyone tell you clear-cutting is bad. Clear-cutting done responsibly is the reason we are able to maintain oak trees in our forests. Meanwhile we get to reap the benefits of lumber and paper products in our everyday lives. Trees are a wonderful renewable natural resource. As outdoor lovers and conservationists we should all be supportive of responsibly utilizing our renewable natural resources. I'll take wood over concrete, steel, or plastic any day.

MTRA National Trails Day – Work Day

Zumbro Bottoms | Theilman | MN

Saturday, June 6, 2015 - This workday is a team effort between MTRA, Zumbro Bottoms Equestrian's and the DNR. We had very productive day. Mother Nature cooperated and the weather was about perfect.

A big Thank-you to our 28 volunteers who worked a total 140 hours!

The 28 volunteers split into 7 teams, each team doing different tasks. A few of the tasks were cleaning out fire pits, repairing wheel barrows, tightening high tie cables, installing high tie cross members and replacing "You are Here" signs.

The 2 new water spigots are now sporting new hitching rails. Posts and rails were donated by Jim Reisinger. Signs were donated by Ken Olson. Cement for the posts were donated by Zumbro Bottoms Equestrians. Thanks Jim, Ken and ZBE!

Caleb Jensen, Frontenac State Park, was able to supply the cross members for the high tie upgrade. These were funded by an MTRA grant. Thanks MTRA!

Rick Jones and Steve Freese were each the winner of a boot tree. The Boot trees were donated by Mark Fitting.

The Zumbro Bottoms Equestrians group supplied lunch for all the workers. After the busy morning, it was appreciated.

The DNR staff responsible for the campground and the trails are great to work with. Thanks to the local saddle club, The Equestrian Connection Horse Club, for coordinating their trail ride with the MTRA work day.

A lot of tasks were accomplished. We have a great team in SE Minnesota

Save the Date - the start times and details will be sent later

April 16, 17 2016 - Work day - Pickup trash on the trails

June 4, 2016 - National Trails Day - Work day

Aug 19, 20 2016 - Work day

Work Day coordinator is Mark Fitting - fittingsnuthouse@gmail.com – 507-273-5883

Thanks All!!

Barb Partington

MTRA Pres-elect

WCCO's "Best of Minnesota" - Zumbro Bottoms

Each week on the 10 p.m. news this past summer WCCO television (channel 4 in the Twin Cities) did a series of stories entitled "The Best of Minnesota". These could be the best bratwurst, the best amusement park, the best - you get it. At the end of each Wednesday's story they announced the subject of the next week's story and asked viewers to vote via social media. Many times they needed to narrow it down to 3 or 4 and then do a final vote to get to the "best".

On July 15th WCCO's Natalie Nyhus announced that the following week's subject would be "the best place to ride your horse in Minnesota". As the voting went along many places in Minnesota received votes but in the end Zumbro Bottoms came out on top. To get the story, WCCO contacted the State Park office at Frontenac on Monday afternoon - the story was to air on Wed night! Natalie wanted to find riders and horses to film and talk with on Tuesday morning. The Park office gave her ZBE President, Barb Partington's name and phone number. It's not easy to find riders and horses who could come on short notice during the week and bring extra horses for Natalie and the camera person!

After many phone calls, Tuesday morning 5 riders and 7 horses met Natalie and ace camera man, Joe Berglove. The weather was warm but beautiful. Joe was overjoyed with the scenery, the horses, and the wild plants he could capture on film. After 2 or 3 hours "on the trail" it was time to sit in the shade of one of the trees in the West Assembly campground to have lunch and a refreshment and share information about horse trails in MN. And especially those at Zumbro Bottoms. The conversation was so interesting that Natalie and Joe decided to capture it on film and use it in the final story.

The end result was a 3 1/2 to 4 minute prime time story on the 10 pm news on July 22nd. It told about horse riding, trails, and our favorite place to ride in Minnesota - Zumbro Bottoms. Many riders saw the story that night and others viewed it on-line after hearing about it. It might still be in the archives on the WCCO website. A big thank you to Natalie and Joe for doing such a wonderful job!

The riders who participated were Barb and Lee Partington, Connie Erickson-Moran, Dan Stussy, and Ken and Lynn Olson. It was fun to be a part of this and make 2 new friends in Natalie Nyhus and Joe Berglove.

Submitted by Ken Olson - ZBE Member

ZBE Directors meeting with Frontenac State Park Supervisors on December 9, 2015

Maintenance of the Zumbro Bottoms campgrounds in SE Minnesota is the responsibility of the Frontenac State Park Supervisor Caleb Jenson. Craig Bloomer, SE Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Supervisor, is in charge of the trails. Below are highlights of the main discussion items.

Campground update

There was approximately 15% more camper usage from last year. This may be attributed to more enforcement of camper fees.

New well – the pressure switch has gone out and will happen again – MT Well thought it would happen twice a year. They are researching a better solution.

A new wheel chair accessible pit toilet was assembled and installed at the West Campground in November.

Regarding generators off at 10:00 pm being enforced for CPAP machines : The Americans with Disabilities act supersedes many rules. Caleb is waiting a directive from the DNR upper management for how to best address this.

Quiet time signs- 10:00 pm to 8:00 am - are going to be created and hung on the kiosks.

Trail Expansion to Kruger Park update

Forestry is OK with development of a new trail to Kruger Park. Andrew Korsberg, Trail Program Coordinator for the DNR is OK with it. Funding for a bridge needs to be found. This is estimated to be approximately \$500,000. It could be part of a bonding bill and will need local legislative support.

We discussed creating the trail and then doing the bridge when funding is available. There is a process that needs to be followed. The DNR's priority right now is to take care of what they have. Approval for trail expansion is not likely. If ZBE would volunteer to maintain the trail, it would have a better chance of getting approved. Craig is willing to plan a day to check out and map a new trail. The cost to create the trail would be minimal if it were kept to a dirt path.

Redesignation of Trails Update

If a new trail is created – it would be best to have it done the same time as the rest of the trail redesignations. Would minimize the costs.

April 16, 17 – work day - Pickup trash on trails

Craig is willing to give a 2 day permit with the condition that no one is on the trails until noon or later. This will allow the turkey hunters to not be disturbed.

We will send Nadine information on the work day and she will post it in their information page.

June 4, Saturday - ZB Work day

Walnut grove – We would like to install additional high ties and repair existing high ties. Craig is going to get approval from Chad Gelner(DNR Forestry)

Aug 19,20,21 – work day

Work project discussed – additional high ties, more cross bars, gravel under high ties

Rescue Points – update

Plan to move rescue points out of the campgrounds.

Golden Eagles motorcycle club is actively involved in this project.

West campground – will be moved to the field. At this time the land is leased for farming. When the lease is up, (a couple of years) it will be re-written to accommodate the rescue point.

North campground – OK not being a rescue point as long as the rescue point by the bridge is clear. There was a pile of gravel at this site, it has now been moved.

Central campground – with the additional high lines there is not a clear landing spot. Would like to clear an area in the neighboring field. In this field trees have been planted. Getting the OK from Forestry.

911 phone in campground

Booster / antenna an option. ZBE will do some research.

Possible ZBE Fundraiser - Trail Hankie

Don't be in a rush to order. Nadine is going thru the process to get approval. She is trying to get the approval process changed so it would be simpler going forward. ZBE will probably need to be a 501c3 non-profit.

Trail Erosion – Rock Hill / Dakota Draw / West Shortcut / Texas

Craig has contacted Andrew Korsberg (DNR Trail Program Coordinator). They are going to request to use Trail Pass funds, and submit to FRTP (Federal Recreational Trail Program) to get the matching funds. Would like to contract it out. Would be done summer of 2017.

Barry and Mark marked problem areas on the map. There was a lot of discussion on how to minimize the erosion. More water bars are needed. Moving certain trails is an option. Which would require a DNR process. This would be doable but more work. Craig asked if the horse people would be opposed to widening a trail to repair and then allow it to grow back in.

Frostbite Report - New this year, users were asked to pay when they entered the park.

Park staff went around checking for those who had not paid.

DNR staff were there Wed evening and Thur evening, Friday and Saturday all day. Barb and Cindy helped off and on. By Thursday, there were a lot of rigs already there. Note for next year, to be there most all day on Thursday. On Thursday evening there was a domestic dispute. Caleb called in for reinforcements. 3 local police cars arrived within 10-15 minutes. This year not as busy as last year. Weather was a factor. Rainy on Friday. There was room for more rigs. All high ties were full.



2014 revenue = \$8900 2015 revenue = \$11,000

Increased revenue attributed to DNR efforts in fee collection.

Upper Sand Coulee Trail & South Access Loop - unsafe after motorcycle event

Craig Bloomer is not willing to request the motorcycles not use these trails.

Volunteer Hours

Barb will send spread sheet to Nadine Meyer. She is tracking volunteer hours for the park. ZBE Volunteer hours worked = 405 hours

Golden Eagles Motorcycle event

Very few camp the night. For the fall ride they donated \$5000 to the park, and paid a \$200 fee for the permit to ride.

Pack it in \ Pack it out sign

ZBE requested to have a couple signs created to be placed at trail heads.

Volunteer Hours

Here is a list of projects that our volunteers worked on

Thanks to all who worked on these

4/18/2015 - Pick up trash on trail - 87 hours

4/21/2015 - Pick up trash - 28 hours

6/2015 - Install signs - 18 hours

6/4/2015 - Getting ready for Work day - 32 hours

6/5/2015 - Clear trees off trail - 12 hours

6/6/2015 - Work day - 140 hours

6/9/2015 - Finish cross-member installs - 25 hours

10/14/2015 - Clear trees off trail - 18 hours

10/20/2015 - Hang signs on trail - 23 hours

11/1/2015 - Store wheel barrows in shed - 4 hours

2015 - Misc times/dates - 18 hours

Total time worked - 405 hours

Trail Trash Pickup - 2015

ZB trail trash pick up was a great success. There were 15 people and 10 horses able to make it. We were able to pick approximately 15 to 20 bags along with tires and other assorted misc. We covered trails on both sides of the river, of course there are more trails and trash than we were able to cover. Bush Lite beer cans and water bottles are the most popular. Everyone I talked with thinks it would be a good annual event. The lack of vegetation makes it much easier to see and collect trash, so early in the season would be best. Thanks to everyone for a successful afternoon.

The people in the pictures are Steve Freese, Barry Saylor, Mark Fitting, Lee and Barb Partington.



Volunteers at work



Steve Freese and Barry Saylor - grinding cross members



Rick Jones and Steve Freese - Applying tree protection from beavers



Jean Koenig - wheel barrow inspector



Joan Dulek - wheel barrow repair



Tyra Witt and Carol Schimek - fire pit clean up



Larry Witt and Bob Buchardt - tighten high tie cable

Additions to the West Assembly Area - 2015



Manure bunker

Funded by Minnesota Trail Riders Association. Installed by Frontenac State Park Staff



Two water spigots

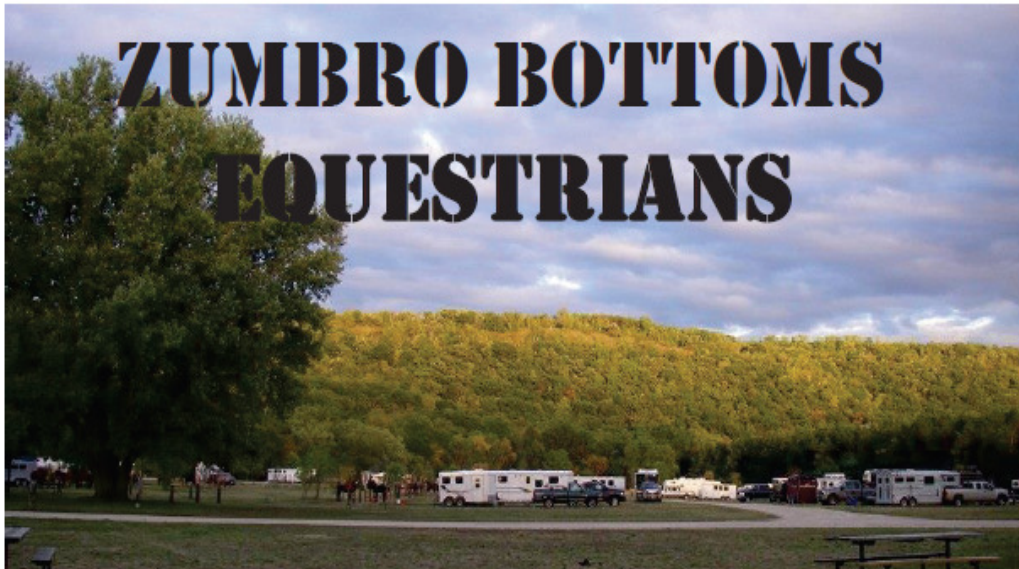
Funded 50% Legacy & 50% Federal Recreational Trail Program
Posts and rails were donated by Jim Reisinger. Signs were donated by Ken Olson. Cement for the posts were donated by Zumbro Bottoms Equestrians



One wheelchair accessible pit toilet

Funded 25% Horse Trail Pass & 75% Federal Recreational Trail Program

19 Wheel Barrows (not pictured)
50% funded by MTRA and 50% by FRTP (Federal Recreational Trail Program)



Zumbro Bottoms, located in SE Minnesota, is a special place. This group is about enhancing your equine riding and camping experience at the Zumbro Bottoms Unit of the Richard J Dorer State Forest and protecting this treasure for future generations of equine riders.

Check out our website at - <http://zumbrobottomsequestrians.weebly.com/index.html>

Please join today!!

Annual dues are \$10.00 per individual or family. Annual dues are Oct 1 - Sept 30 each year.

ZBE Membership/Renewal

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

ZBE MEMBERSHIP \$10 + DONATION
\$ _____ = TOTAL \$ _____
CHECKS PAYABLE TO
ZUMBRO BOTTOMS EQUESTRIANS
MAIL TO: CINDY FITTING
21535 505TH ST
PLAINVIEW, MN 55964-3100