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# JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

September 7, 2023

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Attn: John Pohlman  
P.O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing to express my support for the master plan variance to allow the expansion of equestrian trails in Newport State Park in Door County. The expansion of equestrian trails in Newport State Park will draw in more visitors and generate more revenue for the parks.

The park currently contains 26 miles of hiking and biking trails. The intent of this expansion is to limit the interaction between hikers/bikers with horseback riders. Maintaining the sense of solitude, while still providing a new experience for visitors.

According to a UW-Extension report, more than half of Wisconsin owners ride their horses for pleasure on trails once or more per week. This expansion would draw in horseback riders providing them with four to six miles of trails, equivalent to almost a half-day ride. I urge you to approve this plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel Kitchens".

Representative Joel Kitchens  
Wisconsin State Assembly

Wisconsin DNR;  
Atten: John Pohlman LF/6  
P.O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Dear Sir,

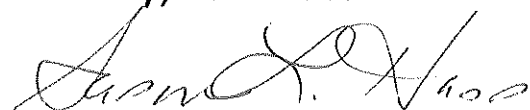
I'm not quite sure where to start... I have been a member of the Thumbs Up Riders horse club since it's conception over 20 years ago. Our goal has been to acquire a trail in Door County that equine enthusiasts could use safely and respectfully. At one point we were given the chance to put a trail on County Park land but when the day came for light clearing of underbrush, we were met with strong opposition and the progress was put on hold. We voiced our concerns to the board and although we found out they hadn't even read our supporting material that proved horses don't spread weed seeds and that our trail pattern had been approved as being ecologically sound to reduce any erosion, we were denied continuance.

But we were still persistent. We continued to do fundraising and make our presence known in the county. And then, we heard the Master Plan for the State parks in our area was being reviewed. We got support and managed to be included as a future project for the local parks and our hopes were renewed. We understand that some areas cannot be considered because of various factors. After much discussion, we were told we could plot a trail in the area known as Sugar

Bush, within the Newport State Park. We were to design a new trail and only cross existing trails in the process. A few of our club members have attended state approved Trail Construction classes and armed with this knowledge, we set out. It was daunting. There are bluff crevices and other areas dangerous to a small horse hoof. After many hours, we had approximately 6 miles ready to be approved. Then we found out over half the area plotted was in a protected zone we were not aware of. Despite attempting to stay in contact with park officials, to say they have not been helpful is an understatement. Many lengths of proposed trail have had to be rerouted and now include sections along the roadway (not ideal but acceptable) and once again we have been blocked from progress.

We have resources and funds, there are donations we can access when a trail is approved. We are simply looking for an opportunity to prove we can be good stewards to the land. Across Wisconsin there are many areas that welcome horse riders to enjoy the quiet and beautiful scenic areas. Door County has 4 (5, if you count 'Rock Island') lovely state parks but no trails for equines. Yes... there's the Ahnapee trail but that's a straight line railroad track barely suitable for horses because of the speed bicyclers can use it. Our trail would meander through the woods, going around large trees and rocks, certainly not a 'race track'. We would welcome sharing it with hikers. We are the epitome of a silent sport and hope you will consider giving us a chance to be a part of economy that is Door County tourism.

Most sincerely, Suzi Hass

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzi Hass".

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023  
WISCONSIN DNR: ATTN. JOHN POHLMAN  
LF/6; P.O.BOX 7921  
MADISON, WI 53703-7921

FROM:  
WILLIAM E. SCHECKLER, M.D.  
1802 MONROE. STREET, UNIT 113  
MADISON, WI 53711  
A FOUNDER AND PAST PRESIDENT OF  
THE NEWPORT WILDERNESS SOCIETY

THIS LETTER CONCERNS THE PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF NEWPORT STATE PARK'S MASTER PLAN TO ALLOW FOR EQUESTRIAN TRAILS IN THE PARK. IN MY VIEW, ANY SUCH MODIFICATION WOULD CHANGE THE CHARACTER AND VALUE OF NEWPORT AS A BACKPACK/WILDERNESS VENUE.

IN THE 38 YEARS OF ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE NWS, ALL OF WHICH I HAVE ATTENDED, THE ISSUE OF HORSE TRAILS WAS NEVER SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED. SOME NEIGHBORS WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO USE THEIR SNOWMOBILES IN THE PARK.  
THE NOISE IN THE PRISTINE WINTER, AND THE HARDENING OF TRAILS EXCLUDED SNOWMOBILES AND OTHER MOTORIZED VEHICLES.

I HAVE HIKEED ALL 36 MILES OF NEWPORT TRAILS IN ALL SEASONS OF THE YEAR. WALKING, SKIING OR SNOW SHOEING.

ASSUMING THE EXISTING TRAILS WOULD BE OFF LIMITS TO HORSES (BECAUSE OF HORSE DROPPINGS). A NEW SET OF TRAILS WOULD HAVE TO BE DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED. WITH TIGHT PARK BUDGETS .. WHERE IS THE MONEY COMING

FROM? THERE WOULD ALSO BE A NEED FOR A LOT TO PARK THE TRUCKS AND HORSE TRAILERS . THE WOULD BE SIZABLE AND UNATTRACTIVE ADDITION TO THE PARK LANDSCAPE.

NEWPORT IS SIMPLY NOT THE RIGHT PARK FOR HORSES.



BILL SCHECKLER  
670 WILDERNESS LANE  
ELLISON BAY, WI 54210

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(608) 255-4615

XC MARC GLASSER, PRESIDENT NWS  
BRIAN GRUBE, NEWPORT PARK MANAGER