

Excerpt from 2014 Field Forest Management Plan

a. Trail Management Concerns & Desired Future Conditions

The Field Forest Trails are in need of improvement to meet guidelines defined in the Association's *Trail Construction and Maintenance Packet*. Erosion is a problem on some of the trails, namely in steep, downhill areas, where a trail has become gullied. Erosion can be corrected by re-routing sections of trail to traverse slopes rather than travelling up and down the fall line. Additionally, erosion can be managed by installing drains and other-water diversion structures. Additional erosion control measures must also be installed during any logging operations that cross trails. Because of the many streams and other wetlands on the Field Forest, many activities contemplated for the Field Forest may come under the jurisdiction of the Durham Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. While forestry and agriculture are permitted in wetlands as of right, permits must be obtained for associated activities, such as stream crossings.

Currently, the Forest roads and trails are being heavily used by neighboring commercial horse stables. Equestrians are using a self-created access trail on the west side of the property and have proceeded to develop many of their own trails. These bridle trails are not only having a severe impact on the established trails, but their self-created trails have not been developed with sustainable trail concepts or best - practices in mind. All of this has been done without consultation or permission from CFPA.

Our recommendation for horse use is:

- The neighboring stable owners construct a trail on their own property specifically connecting their stables to the northeastern corner of their property and the Field Forest (See Trails Map 2, Appendix g);
- CFPA designs and builds an Equestrian Connector Trail (ECT) across the Field Forest at the expense of stable owners providing the riders a link to the logging roads and trails in Cockaponset State Forest;
- The ECT be signed consistently from beginning (the stables) to end (Bear Rock Road) so riders have no difficulty or confusion about where they are allowed to ride;
- Property lines are clearly marked showing areas where access is and is not allowed;

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- The stable owners provide all boarders with a map showing equestrians where they are allowed to ride;
- Equestrian use be limited solely to the ECT on Field Forest;
- CFPA and the stable owners mutually agree to an annual, renewable lease outlining terms and conditions of equestrian use of the ECT (lease to be immediately revoked if equestrians branch from the ECT onto other parts of the Forest);
- Stable owners provide annual funding (amount TBD) for maintenance and improvements of the ECT on Field Forest as needed;
- Stable owners add CFPA as additional insured in liability insurance policy.

ATV's have also been encountered on the Forest and their impact is evident. New trails have been developed by these riders and specifically, watercourses have been negatively impacted. Steep trails are experiencing increased soil loss and erosion due to the impact of these vehicles.

A detailed plan outlining the current issues and the desired future condition of the trail system is attached (see Trails Maps, Appendix g).

Plan Update (2017): An equestrian connector trail (ECT) has been built between the neighboring stable and the Field Forest property by the adjoining landowners. On the Field Forest property, the ECT was also constructed by CFPA volunteers and now links riders from the new stable trail over to the Cockaponset State Forest. This has been a cooperative and successful project. The ECT will be monitored for erosion and improvements as necessary. It may also be closed periodically for property management reasons (timber harvest, hunting, etc.). The stable owner will be advised of these closures.

Additionally, the main blue trail has been partially relocated to reduce erosion. We plan to update kiosk maps and signage in the near future to reflect this change.