

Full Authority
16 November 2023

Callaghan's Rapids Conservation Area Maintenance Report Regarding Horse Manure

Background

A public complaint was brought forward regarding the condition of the Callaghan's trails to the General Manager's attention early in October, 2023. The complaint focused on the excessive horse manure and its impact on all users of the area.

Callaghan's Rapids Conservation Area is a multi-use park. The Crowe River at Callaghan's has always been and continues to provide a resting and watering stop for horses and deer alike. Two equestrian groups use Callaghan's northern trails:

1. Horsing Around Horse Ranch, and
2. Mennonites

Horsing Around is an equestrian riding ranch that uses the north trail at Callaghan's to connect with the EOTA trail and then onto their ranch trails at the McCleary Road extension. The Mennonites travel along the EOTA trail from Havelock to Highway 62. Both use the river to water and rest up their horses. A complaint was received by the CVCA regarding excessive horse manure along the north trail and at the river embankment below the two bridges.

A meeting was held on October 25, 2023 between myself and our lead volunteer, Mr. Marc Forget at Callaghan's. Mr. Forget is currently the lead hand in a longitudinal project to rehabilitate Callaghan's and one of his many hats he wears acts in a capacity similar to an interim "park ranger". It was agreed that an investigation and correction of the manure problem would be appropriate.

The following observations, recommendations and actions are provided for the CVCA Board's information.

Investigation

Mr. Forget investigated the situation and fully agrees that the complaint was justified. Horse manure in some places along the north trail had accumulated over many months to the point where passage by pedestrians or cyclists would be uncomfortable to say the least, not to mention the untidiness. Mr. Forget has been using this trail for decades and cannot recall seeing this much accumulation until this past summer. Without going into too much detail, the degree of manure decay was quite varied, from fresh droppings to droppings that had been present for quite some time.

In addition, there was two distinct categories of droppings that confirms the presence of Mennonite and Horsing Around horses. The accumulation was certainly deemed unacceptable and Mr. Forget removed and disposed of all the horse manure from the north trail and the limestone shoreline below the bridges. This task took two hours.

Recommendations and Future Actions

Horseback riding and our fellow Mennonites are welcomed at Callaghan's. Mr. Forget recommends periodic clean ups, the timing of which will be coordinated with horseback riding at Horsing Around and infrequent stopovers by Mennonites. This will provide acceptable cleanliness of the north trail and prevent accumulation of horse manure along this trail and at the riverbed. This task will be integrated into current trail monitoring and maintenance done by volunteers. This will add only a few minutes every week to the current work load.

Mr. Forget and I thank the complainant for bringing this important information to the attention of the CVCA as we use it to make the experience at Callaghan's safe and memorable for all users.

Board Information**TP**