

Shared-Use Trails in Canada

A Study of Trail Users, Inventory,
Key issues and Best Practices

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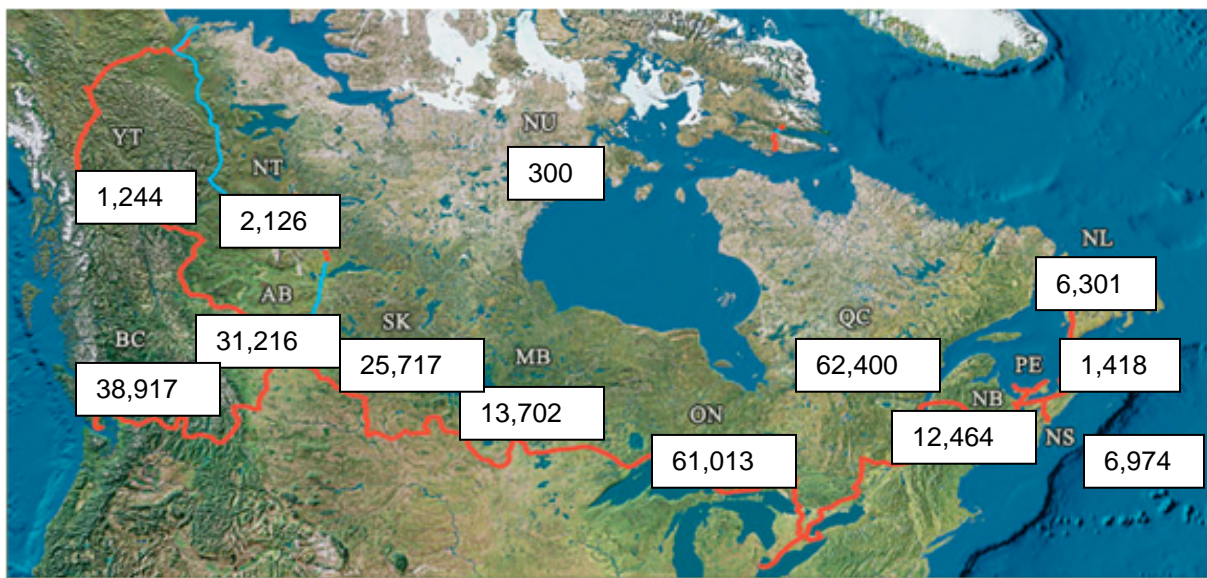
Executive Summary

There are more than 263,000 kilometres of managed trails throughout Canada. Many of these trails are restricted to single uses such as snowmobiling, ATVing, hiking, cross country skiing, mountain biking or cycling but currently more than 28,000 kilometres of managed trails in Canada are shared use. This study provides an overview of managed trails in Canada with an emphasis on shared use trails.

As demand for additional managed trails in Canada is increasing, in future years it will be even more important to share the scarce land resources we have available for recreation. This study examines the current trail inventory across Canada and the management practices for trail development and maintenance. It also looks at best practices on shared use trails and considers examples that could be adopted in other regions.

The following map of the route of the Trans Canada Trail across Canada has been used as a backdrop to illustrate the number of kilometres of trails in each province and territory.

Kilometres of Managed Trail in Each Province and Territory of Canada



The above numbers illustrate the wide variation in trail development across Canada. Since there is a significant variance in population between different regions of the country, the consultants developed a means for measuring the relative amount of trail development by compiling a ratio of metres of trail per resident of each province and territory. Of course the northern part of the country came out on top because of their sparse population. However, in terms of provinces, Saskatchewan got top marks with a ratio of 26.6 metres of trail per resident. More details regarding these ratios and an analysis of trail inventory is contained in the following sections.

Introduction

Trails can be a myriad of things to a variety of people. Trails can be as simple as a neighbourhood footpath, as challenging as a long distance hiking trail such as the International Appalachian Trail or as complex as a shared use trail from coast to coast to coast such as the Trans Canada Trail.

Trails can be urban or rural and they include:

- Footpaths with natural surfaces
- Multi-use tracks with asphalt or crusher dust surfaces
- On-road and off-road bicycle routes
- Walkways, boardwalks and sidewalks
- Abandoned rail lines
- Rails with Trails (trails adjacent to operating rail lines)
- Road allowances and machinery tracks
- Forestry and mining access roads designated as trails
- Winter paths for snowmobiles
- Waterways
- Canal tow paths, dykes and irrigation surface roads

Trail users include: walkers, hikers, joggers, cyclists, inline skaters, horseback riders, cross country skiers, mountain bikers, snowshoers and dogsledders. People with disabilities or mobility challenges and those who use motorized scooters can also use trails that have been built to accessibility standards. There are also motorized trail users who operate specialized recreational vehicles such as snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes. Water routes are enjoyed through kayaking, canoeing, and rafting.

While some trails are intended for a single use (e.g. mountain biking trails) others accommodate multiple or shared uses such as walking and cycling. Some trails are seasonal (such as snowmobile trails in the winter and waterways in the summer) while others are operational all year long. The best known example of a shared use trail in Canada is the Trans Canada Trail. It is designed to serve six core activities: hiking/walking, cycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and canoeing/kayaking. In some provinces, ATVs are permitted on rural sections of the Trans Canada Trail.

There are many different terms used by people in the trails community across Canada. Accordingly we have provided definitions for these terms and common acronyms

Trails in Canada are built and maintained largely by the efforts of volunteer-driven, not-for-profit organizations with varying levels of support from their community and local, provincial and federal governments. Often governments encourage local community groups to adopt sections of trails that are located on crown land (e.g. abandoned rail lines) because it encourages people to take pride in the management and stewardship of “their” local trail. It is also much less costly for community groups to build and maintain sections of trail because they can mobilize volunteer resources and obtain corporate contributions. There are also many instances where municipal recreation departments, provincial government agencies and regional, provincial or national park authorities are responsible for the operation of trails. Often trail development is made possible through the generous support and cooperation of private

land owners who make their land available at no cost for others to enjoy. Trail development and management is a working example of how good things happen when volunteers, landowners, local businesses and governmental organizations work together for the public good.

Objective and Purpose

The Novus Consulting Group Limited¹ was commissioned by the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV) to conduct this study. The overall objective is to publish accurate information that is currently not available to the public. The COHV is a partner in the National Trails Coalition along with the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations and the Canadian Trails Federation². The goal of the National Trails Coalition is to bring together the major partners involved in trail development and to encourage collaboration and cooperation to enhance the trail system in Canada.

The purpose of this study was to gather data about existing Canadian trails and their uses in order to understand the larger picture. This type of research and analysis has not been done before. Once all of the information was compiled, the consultants then segmented the data into single use and shared use trails for further analysis. The consultants also examined the different ways that trail development has occurred across Canada and they researched a number of best practices for shared use trails.

Scope

The scope of this project was broad in that it was a national study of managed trails. However, the scope was limited to secondary research and, accordingly, the study was dependent upon the availability of data from a number of diverse sources. The quality of data varied widely from province to province. Some provincial trail associations have very detailed databases of trail inventory information while others have virtually nothing. In addition to the managed trail system in Canada, there are also many unauthorized trails. Those unauthorized trails are outside the scope of this study.

Methodology

The consultants used secondary research techniques to source data regarding trail inventory and management practices. Sources of information were the provincial trails organizations, provincial governments, national trail user groups, provincial trail user groups, websites such as Canada Trails³ and Trailpeak⁴ as well as publications such as Backroad Mapbooks.

The consultants encountered difficulty in obtaining information about equestrian trails. These types of trails are generally related to specific riding stables. Information about the number of

¹ <http://www.novusconsulting.com>

² The Canadian Trails Federation (CTF) is a not-for-profit organization whose members are the provincial trails associations across Canada. More information about CTF and its members may be found in Appendix A.

³ <http://www.canadatrails.ca>

⁴ <http://www.trailpeak.com>

kilometres of single use riding trails is not generally available. Of all of the provinces, British Columbia had the best information available regarding equestrian trails and they also had the highest percentage of shared use trails that permit horseback riding.

In some cases such as Ontario, there is excellent datum available online through the Ontario Trails Council website⁵. This data was downloaded and sorted into trail uses for each of more than 1,000 trails. Most provincial trails organizations do not have this level of detail regarding their trail inventory. In some cases estimates from knowledgeable trail managers were used. Datum regarding sections of the Trans Canada Trail is readily available by province and trail name via the TCT website⁶. Special efforts were made to avoid duplication by using distinct trail names in each province as the primary data field. Once the data was compiled for each province, it was then reviewed by representatives of the respective provincial trails organizations to verify its accuracy.

⁵ <http://www.ontariotrails.on.ca>

⁶ <http://www.tctrail.ca>

Cross Canada Review of Trail Inventory and Management

Overview of Canadian Trails

To the best of our knowledge until now there has never been a compilation of the total kilometres of trails in Canada. Tables 1 and 2 below are based upon data collected from a number of sources in each province and territory. The data has been segmented into single use and shared use trails plus paddling routes and road routes. It is likely that there are additional trails that have not yet been tabulated.

There are currently more than 263,000 kilometres of managed trails in Canada. Table 1 shows that more than 85% of these trails are for single uses. Snowmobiling is the largest component of single use trails with almost 45% of total managed trails in Canada. Shared use trails represent almost 11% of the total. The remaining 4% is comprised of paddling and road routes.

Table 1

Kilometres of Managed Trails in Canada by Trail Use

	Km.	% of Total
Single Use Trails		
Snowmobiling	117,996	44.7%
ATVing	52,445	19.9%
Hiking, walking, running	27,677	10.5%
Cross country skiing	13,313	5.0%
Mountain biking	8,405	3.2%
Cycling (touring)	<u>5,099</u>	<u>1.9%</u>
Sub-Total:	224,934	85.2%
Shared Use Trails		
Walking & cycling	11,500	4.4%
add snowmobiling	11,766	4.5%
add ATVing	<u>5,077</u>	<u>1.9%</u>
Sub-Total:	28,343	10.7%
Paddling Routes		
Canoeing / kayaking	3,012	1.1%
Road Routes		
Cycling (touring)	7,629	2.9%
Total:	263,919	100.0%

Our data shows that motorized trails represent more than 70% of total kilometres of managed trails in Canada while active transport (non-motorized) trails represent more than 25%. Active transport includes activities such as walking/hiking, cycling, mountain biking, cross country skiing and horseback riding.

Table 2 shows that Ontario and Quebec comprise more than 46% of the total number of kilometres of trails in Canada. They are followed in size by British Columbia and Alberta. These four provinces combined represent more than 73% of all Canadian trails.

Table 2

Canadian Managed Trails by Number of Kilometres per Province

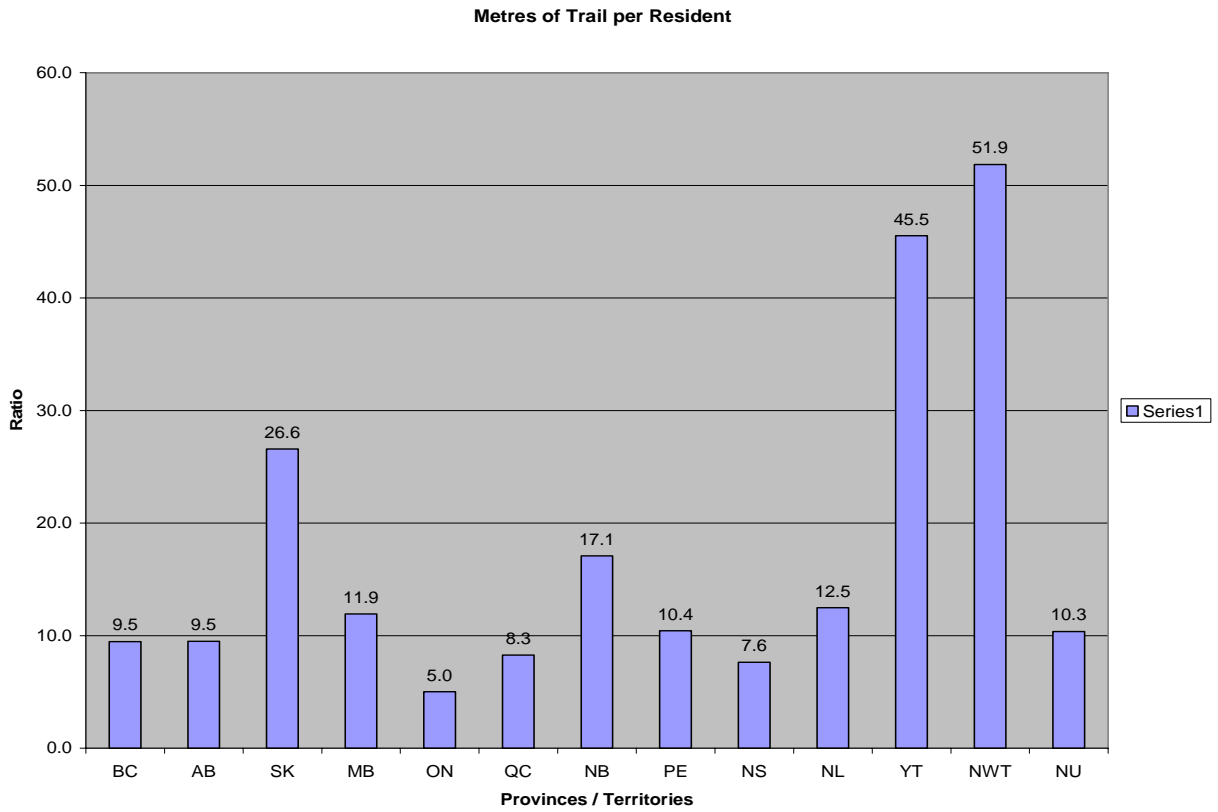
Province / Territory	Single Use Trails		Shared-Use Trails		Paddling Routes	Roads	Total Km Managed Trails	Percent of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Active Transport	Motorized				
Newfoundland & Labrador	1,188	4,000	27	1,086	0	0	6,301	2.4%
Nova Scotia	850	3,563	184	2,025	263	89	6,974	2.6%
Prince Edward Island	258	600	98	400	0	62	1,418	0.5%
New Brunswick	1,336	10,000	311	697	125	0	12,469	4.7%
Quebec	9,204	48,418	943	990	0	2,845	62,400	23.6%
Ontario	13,403	38,975	2,458	3,014	294	2,869	61,013	23.1%
Manitoba	2,101	10,271	736	594	0	0	13,702	5.2%
Saskatchewan	3,627	20,000	1,549	190	351	0	25,717	9.7%
Alberta	10,478	18,614	743	331	850	200	31,216	11.8%
British Columbia	11,697	16,000	6,064	4,178	0	978	38,917	14.7%
Yukon Territory	0	0	0	780	0	586	1,366	0.5%
Northwest Territories	0	0	28	618	1480	0	2,126	0.8%
Nunavut	0	0	0	300	0	0	300	0.1%
Totals:	54,142	170,441	13,141	15,203	3,363	7,629	263,919	100.0%
Percentage of Total:	20.5%	64.6%	5.0%	5.8%	1.3%	2.9%	100.0%	

Shared use trails represent only 11% of the total kilometres of trail in Canada but this category has grown significantly in recent years. We will focus on shared use trails in more detail in subsequent sections of this report.

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, the consultants compiled a ratio of the number of metres of trail per resident for each province and territory. Chart A below shows that the highest ratios were recorded by the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory. With respect to provinces, Saskatchewan had the highest ratio at 26.6 and the next highest province was New Brunswick with 17.1 metres of trail per resident. The lowest ranking province, which also has by far the largest population, was Ontario with a ratio of 5.0 metres of trail per resident.

Chart A

Metres of Managed Trail per Resident for Canadian Provinces and Territories



Trail Activities by Province

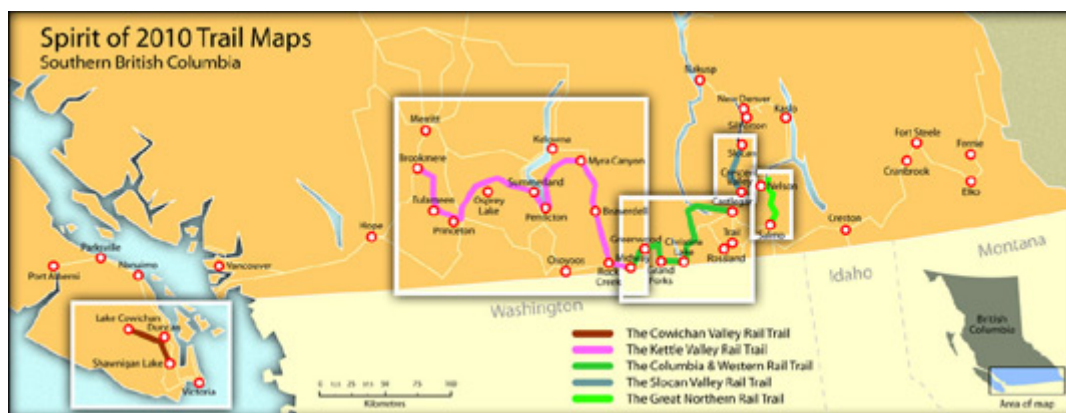
Following is a review of trail activities in each province and territory starting from the west.

British Columbia

In 2006 the Government of British Columbia embarked upon a multi-phased approach to develop a recreation trails strategy. A survey of provincial recreation organizations was conducted and it provided preliminary information regarding an inventory of the existing trail network in BC. Following is a summary of their preliminary inventory:⁷

Type of Trail:	Km.
Rail Trails	2,000
MTCA Public Rec. Trails	9,237
BC Parks Trails	7,076
Regional District Trails	980
Municipal Trails	9,096
Parks Canada Trails	950
Total:	29,339

There are six rail trails that are owned by three different departments of the BC Government: Tourism BC (3), Ministry of Transportation (2) and Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (1). Five of these rail trails have been brought together under one umbrella for marketing purposes under the name of the “Spirit of 2010 Trail”. They are: The Kettle Valley Rail Trail, The Slochan Valley Rail Trail, The Great Northern Rail Trail, The Columbia & Western Rail Trail and The Cowichan Valley Rail Trail. The uses on these trails are: hiking, walking, cycling, horseback riding and cross country skiing. The Kettle Valley Rail Trail also permits snowmobiling in the winter.



In 2005 the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA) assumed responsibility for recreational trails on Crown land in British Columbia. The MTCA Trails are managed by the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch of this Ministry, often through a management agreement with a local recreation organization. The BC Parks trails are under the jurisdiction of the BC Parks division of the Ministry of the Environment. The authors of the Background Report for the Recreation Trails Strategy acknowledge that their numbers of kilometres of trail are

⁷ Source: Recreation Trails Strategy for British Columbia, Phase 1: Background Report, May 2007.

understated because many trail organizations did not provide sufficient information in their completed questionnaires.

A draft Trails Strategy, developed through collaboration and consensus by a multi-agency stakeholder and government Trails Strategy Committee, was published in the Fall of 2008.⁸ This document outlined broad, strategic, provincial level goals. Community and stakeholder feedback is currently being solicited. Public meetings have been scheduled across the province until January, 2009. The next step will be for the Steering Committee and the consultants to incorporate the feedback they receive into a draft final report, refine the proposed actions and develop a plan to implement the strategy over the next five years.

By drawing upon additional sources of information, the consultants compiled an estimate of 38,917 kilometres of trail in BC. Table 2 provides details of kilometres of trail according to trail usage:

Table 3 **British Columbia Managed Trails**
Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails		Water Route	Roads	Total	% of Total
	Non-Motorized	Motorized				
Hiking , walking, running	7,125	0	0	0	7,125	18.3%
Cycling (touring)	231	0	0		231	0.6%
Mountain biking	2,260	0	0	0	2,260	5.8%
Cross country skiing	2,020	0	0	0	2,020	5.2%
Equestrian	61	0	0	0	61	0.2%
Snowmobiling	0	8,000	0	0	8,000	20.6%
ATVing	0	8,000	0	0	8,000	20.6%
Canoeing, kayaking	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
Sub-Total	11,697	16,000	0	0	27,697	71.2%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & Cycling	3,995	0		978	4,973	12.8%
add Equestrian	2,069	0			2,069	5.3%
add Snowmobile	0	3,393			3,393	8.7%
add ATV	<u>0</u>	<u>785</u>			<u>785</u>	<u>2.0%</u>
Sub-Total	6,064	4,178	0	978	11,220	28.8%
Total	17,761	20,178	0	978	38,917	100.0%
% of Total	45.6%	51.8%	0.0%	2.5%	100.0%	
TCT included above	545	523	0	978	2,046	5.3%
TCST included above	0	900	0	0	900	2.3%
NHTC included above	873	0	0	0	873	2.2%

⁸ Trails Strategy, British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch, 2008

Shared use trails in British Columbia represent a total of 11,220 kilometres (including 978 kilometres of the Trans Canada Trail which are on roads). This sub-total is more than 28% of the total kilometres of trail in BC. Based upon distance, about 60% of these shared use trails (excluding roads) are active transportation trails and shared equestrian usage represents about one-third of that or 20% of total shared use trails in BC. The remaining 40% are motorized shared use trails. Single use snowmobile and ATV trails each represent 40% of the motorized component while shared use motorized trails (snowmobiling and ATVing) represent the other 20%.

The BC Snowmobile Federation reports that their member clubs manage about 8,000 km of single use snowmobile trails. There are another 4,178 km of shared use trails that permit snowmobile use in the winter (including 785 km that also permit ATV use in the summer).

We have estimated that there are about 8,000 km of ATV trails in BC that are primarily on forest service roads. In addition there are about 785 km of shared use trails that permit ATVing during 3 seasons as well as snowmobiling in the winter.

The Trails Society of British Columbia (Trails BC) has the responsibility for building and managing the Trans Canada Trail in British Columbia. At the present time there are 2,046 km of operational Trans Canada Trail in BC but 978 km are road links. Snowmobiling is permitted in the winter on 523 km of TC Trail in BC but ATVs are not permitted on any part of the Trans Canada Trail in British Columbia.

Alberta

Alberta has a wide diversity of trail users ranging from hikers and cross country skiers who have the magnificent Canadian Rockies to explore, to mountain bikers and cyclists who have access to a growing network of biking trails, as well as ATVers and snowmobilers who have their own network of trails. There is also a significant difference between the trails in the more populated regions in central and southern Alberta compared to the trails in the less populated areas of Northern Alberta where there are vast stretches of wild country and relatively little in the way of recreational amenities. Some of the greatest touring rivers run through Northern Alberta. Table 3 below provides a breakdown of more than 31,000 km of managed trails in Alberta.

Table 4

Alberta Managed Trails - Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails				Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route	Roads		
Hiking , walking, running	6,841	0	0	0	6,841	21.9%
Cycling (touring)	425	0	0	200	625	2.0%
Mountain biking	1,460	0	0	0	1,460	4.7%
Cross country skiing	1,752	0	0	0	1,752	5.6%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	8,614	0	0	8,614	27.6%
ATVing	0	10,000	0	0	10,000	32.0%
Canoeing, kayaking	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>850</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>850</u>	<u>2.7%</u>
Sub-Total	10,478	18,614	850	200	30,142	96.6%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & cycling	743	0	0	0	743	2.4%
add snowmobiling	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
add ATVing	<u>0</u>	<u>331</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>331</u>	<u>1.1%</u>
Sub-Total	743	331	0	0	1,074	3.4%
Total	11,221	18,945	850	200	31,216	100.0%
% of Total	35.9%	60.7%	2.7%	0.6%	100.0%	
TCT included above	743	331	0	0	1,074	3.4%
TCST included above	0	190	0	0	190	0.6%
NHTC included above	122	0	0	0	122	0.4%

The non-government umbrella trails organization for the province of Alberta is Alberta TrailNet. It is a not-for-profit society that coordinates trail building for local and regional community trail groups and it collaborates with provincial trail user groups. Alberta TrailNet promotes all types of trails. Their major focus is the promotion of active living through the use of recreational trails but they also recognize and support trail routes as another option in the

Alberta transportation system. Alberta TrailNet is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that includes representatives from user groups such as the Alberta Bicycle Association, Alberta Equestrian Federation, Alberta Snowmobile Association, Cross Country Alberta and the Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association.

In 2008 Alberta TrailNet produced a trail map for Northeastern Alberta that shows all of the trails in that region of the province. The project was very successful and Alberta TrailNet has now embarked upon a 3 year program to develop trail maps for the balance of the province.

Saskatchewan

Before the prolific use of the automobile, Saskatchewan was criss-crossed with an abundance of trails that were used as transportation routes. Pathways used by trappers, canoe routes mapped by voyageurs and nomadic patterns used to follow buffalo migration carved their way into the geographic past of this province. Footways, cattle trails and horse paths used by farmers, ranchers, merchants and their families to conduct work, visit neighbours and enjoy nature evolved as communities were built and European migration increased.

As populations grew and automobiles became the primary means of transportation, natural pathways were subsumed by paved roadways; natural areas became urbanized with sidewalks and streets to facilitate transportation. Today's trails in Saskatchewan mimic the natural pathways by providing logical routes for non-automobile transportation.⁹

Table 5

Saskatchewan Managed Trails Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails			Roads	Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route			
Hiking , walking, running	339	0	0	0	339	1.3%
Cycling (touring)	2,132	0	0	0	2,132	8.3%
Mountain biking	215	0	0	0	215	0.8%
Cross country skiing	942	0	0	0	942	3.7%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	10,000	0	0	10,000	38.9%
ATVing	0	10,000	0	0	10,000	38.9%
Canoeing, kayaking	0	0	351	0	351	1.4%
Sub-Total	3,627	20,000	351	0	23,978	93.2%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & cycling	1,549	0	0	0	1,549	6.0%
add snowmobiling	0	170	0	0	170	0.7%
add ATVing	0	20	0	0	20	0.1%
Sub-Total	1,549	190	0	0	1,739	6.8%
Total	5,176	20,190	351	0	25,717	100.0%
% of Total	20.1%	78.5%	1.4%	0.0%	100.0%	
TCT included above	453	190	0	0	643	2.5%
TCST included above	0	1,395	0	0	1,395	5.4%
NHTC included above	15	0	0	0	15	0.1%

⁹ Pathway to Success: A Strategy for Trail Development in Saskatchewan, Sept. 2008, Saskatchewan Trails Association.

Table 5 above illustrates that there is already a strong network of diverse trails in Saskatchewan. Credit for this should go to the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association. They did much of the early trail development work and they were instrumental in forming the Saskatchewan Trails Association in 2004.

In January 2008 the Saskatchewan Trails Association embarked upon the development of a province-wide trails strategy in consultation with the Government of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association and trail stakeholders. The draft strategy was presented to stakeholders at a conference in Regina in September 2008. Feedback obtained from stakeholders will be incorporated into the final version of the strategy.

Manitoba

Manitoba has two distinct elements to its trail network that are directly related to its geography. Since the majority of the province is comprised of prairie, the trails in that part of the province have been built on relatively level traditional pathways or unused road allowances. However, the part of the province that borders on Ontario has a very different geography that is part of the Appalachian Shield where the terrain is more rugged and forested. Trail building in this part of Manitoba is similar in its challenges to those faced in Northwestern Ontario.

Table 6 below shows that there are over 13,000 km of trails in Manitoba. More than 73% of these trails are for snowmobiling. There are very few managed ATV trails in Manitoba. Shared use trails comprise almost 10% of the total and they are about equally divided between active transport and motorized (snowmobile) trails.

Table 6

Manitoba Managed Trails - Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails			Roads	Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route			
Hiking , walking, running	735	0	0	0	735	5.4%
Cycling (touring)	110	0	0	0	110	0.8%
Mountain biking	533	0	0	0	533	3.9%
Cross country skiing	723	0	0	0	723	5.3%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	10,071	0	0	10,071	73.5%
ATVing	0	200	0	0	200	1.5%
Canoeing, kayaking	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
Sub-Total	2,101	10,271	0	0	12,372	90.3%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & cycling	736	0	0	0	736	5.4%
add snowmobiling	0	594	0	0	594	4.3%
add ATVing	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
Sub-Total	736	594	0	0	1,330	9.7%
Total	2,837	10,865	0	0	13,702	100.0%
% of Total	20.7%	79.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
TCT included above	681	478	0	0	1,159	8.5%
TCST included above	0	600	0	0	600	4.4%
NHTC included above	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

The Manitoba Recreational Trails Association Inc. (MRTA) is a not-for-profit organization that is the governing and overseeing body that provides management and direction for trail

development being undertaken by 17 regional trail associations across the province. The MRTA is also responsible for coordinating the building of the Trans Canada Trail in the province. It is governed by a volunteer board, currently consisting of seventeen people, including four regional representatives. The MRTA has one full time executive director and a 30 hour per week office administrator/bookkeeper. The Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism has a Provincial Trails Consultant, who works closely with the MRTA.

The Government of Manitoba has been very supportive of trail development. In addition to providing direct funding, the provincial government has also put in place legislation that exempts not-for-profit organizations from property taxes on land they acquire. This is particularly helpful for the acquisition of abandoned rail lines or private property donated by individual land owners to provincial or community trail groups.

The City of Winnipeg has a network of 120 km of shared use trails. Most of these trails are under the stewardship of local community trail groups that are coordinated by the Winnipeg Trails Association. The Prairie Pathfinders is a very active walking group that has developed maps for about 25 trails in Winnipeg.

Ontario

Table 7 shows that there are over 61,000 kilometres of trails in Ontario. More than 60% of these trails are specifically for snowmobiling in the winter months. There are 525,000 people in Ontario who use snowmobile and ATV trails.¹⁰

Ontario also has a great variety of trails and 26% of them are active transportation trails for walking, cycling, mountain biking and horseback riding. In fact there are 800,000 people in Ontario who use hiking trails.¹¹ Although the majority of cyclists are interested in recreation, many owners are now using their bicycles for active transportation to commute to work or to visit the corner store.

Table 7

Ontario Trails - Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails			Roads	Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route			
Hiking , walking, running	7,608	0	0	0	7,608	12.5%
Cycling (touring)	550	0	0	790	1,340	2.2%
Mountain biking	1,629	0	0	0	1,629	2.7%
Cross country skiing	3,516	0	0	0	3,516	5.8%
Equestrian	100	0	0	0	100	0.2%
Snowmobiling	0	36,975	0	0	36,975	60.6%
ATVing	0	2,000	0	0	2,000	3.3%
Off-road motorcycling	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Canoeing, kayaking	0	0	294	0	294	0.5%
Sub-Total	13,403	38,975	294	790	53,462	87.6%
Shared-Use Trails	2,458	3,014	0	2,079	7,551	12.4%
Total	15,861	41,989	294	2,869	61,013	100.0%
% of Total	26.0%	68.8%	0.5%	4.7%	100.0%	
TCT included above	1,877	857	170	294	3,198	5.2%
TCST included above	0	2,600	0	0	2,600	4.3%
NHTC included above	1,563	0	0	0	1,563	2.6%

Ontario has a world renowned long distance hiking trail called the Bruce Trail. Starting at Niagara Falls, it follows the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, for 894 km before reaching its terminus at Tobermory on Georgian Bay. There are also 400 km of side trails that link to the Bruce Trail. The Bruce Trail Conservancy is a charitable organization that has overall responsibility for managing this conservation corridor. It has 9

¹⁰ Active 2010 Ontario Trails Strategy, 2005, Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion

¹¹ Ibid.

local community groups called Bruce Trail Clubs who are responsible for maintaining, stewarding and promoting the trail.

The Ontario Trails Council (OTC) is the umbrella organization for community trail groups and provincial trail user groups in Ontario. It has 18 volunteer Directors on its Board. This includes six Professional Directors, each one representing a trail user group (Ontario Equestrian Federation, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, Hike Ontario, Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicles, Ontario Federation of Trail Riders, Ontario Federation of Four Wheel Drive Recreationalists), six Regional Directors, each representing a trail management organization or region of Ontario and six Directors-at-Large.

The OTC is dedicated to the development of the Trillium Trail Network in Ontario. It is a four season trail system that supports a range of recreational uses. It includes long distance wilderness pathways, rail trails, waterfront trails, historic colonization roads and urban greenway connectors.

For many years snowmobilers in each province and territory have operated a trail permit system which enabled permit holders to enjoy a wonderful network of groomed snowmobile trails for one annual, weekly or daily fee. A few years ago the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance adopted this concept for other trail users such as ATVers, cyclists, cross-country skiers, horseback riders and dogsledders. In 2008 the OTC collaborated with the Ontario Federation of All-Terrain Vehicle Clubs to expand the trail permit concept for ATVers to a number of regions across Ontario through a program they call the Trillium Trail Network Gold Trail Permit.

Québec

Although there is no umbrella organization that represents trail builders and trail user groups in Québec, there are a number of very strong separate provincial organizations for groups such as hikers, cyclists, snowmobilers and ATVers. The organization that comes the closest to representing trail builders and users is Le Conseil québécois du Sentier transcanadien. It is responsible for building the Trans Canada Trail across Québec. There are representatives on this council from Vélo Québec, la Fédération Québécoise de la Marche, the Québec Federation of Snowmobile Clubs and Québec a cheval.

Table 7 shows that there are at least 62,400 km of trail in the Province of Quebec. Only 3.2% of these trails are shared use trails. This is because each of the trail user groups have developed their own extensive network of trails and there is very little overlap.

Table 8

Quebec Managed Trails - Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails			Roads	Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route			
Hiking , walking, running	2,989	0	0	0	2,989	4.8%
Cycling (touring)	1,601	0	0	2,765	4,366	7.0%
Mountain biking	1,343	0	0	0	1,343	2.2%
Cross country skiing	3,271	0	0	0	3,271	5.2%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	31,373	0	0	31,373	50.3%
ATVing	0	17,045	0	0	17,045	27.3%
Canoeing, kayaking	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Sub-Total	9,204	48,418	0	2,765	60,387	96.8%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & cycling	943	0	0	80	1,023	23.4%
add snowmobiling	0	990	0	0	990	1.6%
add ATVing	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Sub-Total	943	990	0	80	2,013	3.2%
Total	10,147	49,408	0	2,845	62,400	100.0%
% of Total	16.3%	79.2%	0.0%	4.6%	100.0%	
TCT included above	648	717	0	80	1,445	2.3%
TCST included above	0	1,500	0	0	1,500	2.4%
NHTC included above	775	0	0	0	775	1.2%
La Route Verte incl above	1,601	0	0	2765	4,366	7.0%

Cycling is very popular in Québec. It has been developed and promoted by Vélo Québec, a non-profit organization. In collaboration with the Government of Québec, Vélo Québec has

developed La Route verte which spans more than 4,000 km of bikeways across the province. La route verte is profiled as one of the “Best Practices” in a later section of this report.

Hiking is also very popular in the province of Québec. La Fédération Québécoise de la Marche (FQM) www.fgmarche.qc.ca is a government-sponsored organization that is responsible for the promotion of hiking in Quebec. It also oversees the construction and maintenance of the National Hiking Trail (Sentier National) across the province. To date 775 km of the National Hiking Trail have been completed in Quebec. FQM also publishes La Marche magazine and a French-language directory of Quebec trails. It acts as an umbrella group for more than 100 hiking clubs and other outdoor groups in Quebec.

The Quebec Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (FCMQ) www.fcmq.qc.ca was founded in 1974. It is made up of 208 snowmobile clubs, bringing together some 90,000 individual members from all regions of Quebec. Each year over 4,500 members volunteer more than 800,000 hours of their time to maintain a trail network of over 31,000 km.

La Fédération Québécoise des Clubs Quads (FQCQ) www.fqcq.qc.ca is a not-for-profit organization consisting of 123 clubs and associations with over 50,000 individual members who have joined together to develop the ATV sport in Québec. The member clubs of FQCQ offer 17,045 km of groomed and marked trails. Of these, 9,661 km can be used in winter only, 7,384 km in summer and 4,685 km year-round.

In summary, Quebec is a leader when it comes to development of single use trails. The Government of Quebec is very supportive of trail development. Their Department of Transportation works closely with Velo Quebec to build specially marked bicycle lanes along highways. The vast networks of cycling, hiking, snowmobiling and ATVing trails in Quebec make it an ideal destination for outdoor adventurers.

New Brunswick

Table 9 below shows that there are over 12,000 km of trails in New Brunswick. More than half of these trails are for exclusive snowmobile use during the winter months. Another 25% are single use ATV trails. In addition, there are a number of excellent hiking and cycling trails in New Brunswick. The International Appalachian Trail connects from Maine to New Brunswick at Andover and then it weaves its way along 435 km of footpaths to the Quebec border at Matapedia. The Fundy Trail is another world class hiking and cycling opportunity that is adjacent to the Bay of Fundy with the highest tides in the world.

Table 9

New Brunswick Managed Trails - Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails			Roads	Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route			
Hiking , walking, running	486	0	0	0	486	3.9%
Cycling (touring)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Mountain biking	144	0	0	0	144	1.2%
Cross country skiing	706	0	0	0	706	5.7%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	6,700	0	0	6,700	53.7%
ATVing	0	3,300	0	0	3,300	26.5%
Canoeing, kayaking	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>1.0%</u>
Sub-Total	1,336	10,000	125	0	11,461	91.9%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & Cycling	306	0	0	0	306	2.5%
add Equestrian	6	0	0	0	6	0.0%
add Snowmobile	0	397	0	0	397	3.2%
add ATV	<u>0</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>2.4%</u>
Sub-Total	311	697	0	0	1,008	8.1%
Total	1,647	10,697	125	0	12,469	100.0%
% of Total	13.2%	85.8%	1.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
TCT included above	249	397	125	0	771	6.2%
TCST included above	0	525	0	0	525	4.2%
NHTC included above	142	0	0	0	142	1.1%

The trail system in New Brunswick is managed by three organizations: the NB Trails Council Inc. (NBTCI), the New Brunswick Federation of Snowmobile Clubs Inc. (NBFSC) and the New Brunswick All Terrain Vehicle Federation (NBATVF). NBTCI manages the Sentier NB Trail which is a network of shared use recreational trails using the provincially-owned abandoned railway lines. Approximately 850 km of the Sentier NB Trail have been completed to bicycle

standards and several hundred other kilometres of trail are available for walking, snowmobiling and ATVing.

Non-motorized activities such as walking, hiking and cycling are permitted on the Sentier NB Trail. Equestrian use is also allowed on certain sections of this trail system. Motorized activities such as snowmobiling and ATVing are also allowed on certain sections. The snowmobilers have sole use of this trail system from December 1st to April 15th. From April 16th to November 30th the NBATVF has a non-exclusive license for about 270 km of specific sections of this trail system for shared use by ATVers as well as hikers, cyclists and horseback riders where permitted.

The Sentier NB Trail is maintained by NBTCl for an annual payment of \$445,000 through an agreement with the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources. NBTCl also provides promotion/marketing/information to the public and encourages volunteers to become involved in its Adopt-A-Trail and Trail Patrol programs.

In addition to the Sentier NB Trail, there is a system of over 6,000 km of single use snowmobile trails that are maintained by clubs that are members of the NBFSC. Many of these snowmobile trails are on Crown land but some also cross private land through agreements with landowners.

The member clubs of the NBATVF are also responsible for a system of over 3,300 km of single use ATV trails. Most of these trails are on Crown Land or Park Land. Several years ago legislation was enacted that required ATV and snowmobile owners to pay \$25 per year into a trust fund to be used for trail building and maintenance. Members of each of these organizations may apply for funding from their portion of the trust fund. Approximately 400 – 500 km kilometres of new ATV trails are being built each year by members of the NBATVF.

Prince Edward Island

When one thinks of trails on Prince Edward Island the first name that comes to mind is the Confederation Trail. It is a shared use trail that was built on the abandoned rail line that runs 279 km from tip to tip on the island. In 2008 Destination Canada, which markets Canada primarily to Nordic countries, selected the Confederation Trail as one of the top 7 cycling destinations in Canada.¹² This trail is described in more detail later in this report under the section entitled Best Practices.

Table 10 below shows that there are 1,418 km of trail in PEI including snowmobile trails and hiking trails.

Table 10

Prince Edward Island Trails - Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails				Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Paddling Routes	Heritage Roads		
Hiking , walking, running	70	0	0	0	70	4.9%
Cycling (touring)	50	0	0	0	50	3.5%
Mountain biking	32	0	0	0	32	2.3%
Cross country skiing	106	0	0	0	106	7.5%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	600	0	0	600	42.3%
ATVing	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Off-road motorcycling	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Canoeing, kayaking	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
Sub-Total	258	600	0	0	858	60.5%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & Cycling only	98	0	0	62	160	11.3%
add Snowmobiling	<u>0</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>28.2%</u>
Sub-Total	98	400	0	62	560	39.5%
Total	356	1,000	0	62	1,418	100.0%
% of Total	25.1%	70.5%	0.0%	4.4%	100.0%	
TCT included above	8	342	0	0	350	24.7%
TCST included above	0	342	0	0	342	24.1%
NHTC included above	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

Trails in PEI pass through woods and fields, villages and towns. Trekkers and cyclists have a chance to stop, shop, dine out and stay at a local campground, bed & breakfast or inn. In

¹² http://www.destinationcanada.info/canadian_cycling_routes.html

winter many trails are turned over to the PEI Snowmobile Association. The groomed snowmobile trails make an excellent cross-island network that connects to locations for food and accommodations.

Prince Edward Island Trails Inc. (Island Trails) is a not-for-profit non-government volunteer organization which actively supports the promotion, development and enhancement of trails across P.E.I. for healthy recreational and educational use. It has 14 members on its Board of Directors including representatives from the PEI Tourism Industry Association, the Government of Prince Edward Island, The Medical Society of Prince Edward Island, Prince Edward Island Snowmobile Association, Cycling Prince Edward Island and the Active Living Alliance.

Island Trails also organizes and promotes a Trail Officer program. Twenty eight volunteer cyclists have been certified as Trail Officers and they act as ambassadors on the Confederation Trail. Trail Officers attend a two-day training course and they commit to a minimum of one patrol (3 hours) per week on a designated section of the Confederation Trail. Trail Officers receive their appointments from the Minister of Tourism. They are authorized to write warning and summary offence tickets under the Trails Act but their main focus is public relations, education, and voluntary compliance. An award is given to the Trail Officer of the year at an annual volunteer recognition event.

In addition Island Trails recruits Trail Watch Volunteers who walk or cycle a designated section of the Confederation Trail and they report via fax or email once per week on the flora and fauna, wildlife, birds, traffic, and natural or willful damage. Some Trail Watch Volunteers have an assigned section of trail while others are roving volunteers who monitor a different section each week.

Island Trails also organizes an annual Tip to Tip cycle tour on the Confederation Trail. Each Saturday during the summer a group tour is organized for a different section of the trail. Trail Officers accompany the group and arrangements are made to bring the participants and their bicycles back to the starting point by the end of the day. Over the summer the entire length of the Confederation Trail is traversed and participants receive a Tip to Tip certificate.

Nova Scotia

Trails in Nova Scotia are never far from the seacoast; in fact no portion of the province is more than 56 kilometres from the ocean. There are 7,400 kilometres of coastline and this means that there are many opportunities to enjoy coastal hiking trails. There are also more than 1,100 kilometres of abandoned rail lines that were acquired by the provincial government and they are being converted into rail trails. Table 11 below shows that there are almost 7,000 kilometres of trails in Nova Scotia.

Table 11

Nova Scotia Managed Trails Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails				Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route	Roads		
Hiking , walking, running	506	0	0	0	506	7.3%
Cycling (touring)	0	0	0	89	89	1.3%
Mountain biking	195	0	0	0	195	2.8%
Cross country skiing	149	0	0	0	149	2.1%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	2,663	0	0	2,663	38.2%
ATVing	0	900	0	0	900	12.9%
Canoeing, kayaking	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>263</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>263</u>	<u>3.8%</u>
Sub-Total	850	3,563	263	89	4,765	68.3%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & Cycling	184	0	0	0	184	2.6%
add Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
add Snowmobile	0	837	0	0	837	12.0%
add ATV	<u>0</u>	<u>1,188</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,188</u>	<u>17.0%</u>
Sub-Total	184	2,025	0	0	2,209	31.7%
Total	1,034	5,588	263	89	6,974	
% of Total	14.8%	80.1%	3.8%	1.3%	100.0%	
TCT included above	66	326	0	89	481	6.9%
TCST included above	0	600	0	0	600	8.6%
NHTC included above	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

The provincial trails association is the Nova Scotia Trails Federation (NS Trails). Its Board of Directors is comprised of 23 members including 2 members at large, 12 members who represent community trail groups (2 from each of 6 regions) and 9 members who represent provincial trail user groups such as the Equestrian Federation of Nova Scotia, Hike Nova Scotia, Bicycle Nova Scotia, Cross Country Ski Nova Scotia, Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia, All Terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia, Snowmobile Association of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Off Road Riders Association and Atlantic Geo-Caching Association.

NS Trails also manages the Nova Scotia Integrated Trail Patrol program. More than 300 Trail Wardens have been trained as ambassadors to promote safe trail uses throughout the province. They include hikers, cyclists, equestrians, snowmobilers, ATVers, and off road motorcyclists. Trail Wardens patrol regularly on the managed trail system to educate trail users regarding safe practices and provide information and assistance. The Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources has assigned 12 Conservation Officers (2 in each of 6 regions) to a special OHV enforcement team. This team assists with the training of Trail Wardens and coordinates its own trail user education activities with those of the Trail Patrol.

A unique development in Nova Scotia is their trail liability insurance program. Four years ago the Government of Nova Scotia agreed to provide the first \$1 million of coverage on a \$5 million general liability insurance policy that is administered jointly by NS Trails and the Snowmobile Association of Nova Scotia. This policy provides sustainable insurance coverage to community trail groups in Nova Scotia for a reasonable annual premium and it has been very successful.

Newfoundland & Labrador

Interestingly, the earliest trails in Newfoundland and Labrador were not man made at all, having been formed over countless eons by herds of caribou migrating across the barrens and tundra.¹³ These well worn paths were used by native people in search of game. Later, European settlers built additional paths to link isolated settlements along the coastline and to reach stands of heavy timber they needed for their boats. For centuries these rough trails were the only means of transportation other than by sea.

Today trails in Newfoundland and Labrador come in all manner of shapes and sizes, ranging from the winter trails network in Labrador, which runs for 1,500 kilometers, to small community boardwalks and local nature trails. Unique among these is the Newfoundland T’Railway, which follows the route of the old Newfoundland Railway from Port aux Basques in the west to the capital city of St. Johns in the east, a distance of almost 900 kilometres.

Table 12

Newfoundland & Labrador Managed Trails

Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Single Use Trails	Trails				Total	% of Total
	Active Transport	Motorized	Water Route	Roads		
Hiking , walking, running	978	0	0	0	978	15.5%
Cycling (touring)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Mountain biking	82	0	0	0	82	1.3%
Cross country skiing	128	0	0	0	128	2.0%
Equestrian	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Snowmobiling	0	3,000	0	0	3,000	47.6%
ATVing	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	15.9%
Canoeing, kayaking	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Sub-Total	1,188	4,000	0	0	5,188	82.3%
Shared-Use Trails						
Walking & Cycling only	27	0	0	0	27	0.4%
add Snowmobile	0	158	0	0	158	2.5%
add ATV	0	928	0	0	928	14.7%
Sub-Total	27	1,086	0	0	1,113	17.7%
Total	1,215	5,086	0	0	6,301	100.0%
% of Total	19.3%	80.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
TCT included above	15	181	0	0	196	3.1%
TCST included above	0	883	0	0	883	14.0%
NHTC included above	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

¹³ Trails of Newfoundland and Labrador, From a Walk in the Park to a Wilderness Adventure, Newfoundland TRailway Council

Table 12 above shows that there are over 6,300 km of trails in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The East Coast Trail and Gros Morne National Park are two of Newfoundland's premier attractions for hikers. The East Coast Trail extends 520 km as it links communities along the Avalon Peninsula. So far about 220 km of this trail have been completed and the balance is under development. The East Coast Trail has been described as *the jewel in the crown of hiking in Atlantic Canada*¹⁴ and it has also been called one of the 10 premier footpaths in Canada.¹⁵

Gros Morne National Park of Canada was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. It is an area of great natural beauty with a rich variety of scenery, wildlife, and recreational activities that is located in western Newfoundland near Deer Lake. There are more than 100 km of trails in the park, ranging from half-hour strolls to strenuous day hikes. Visitors can hike through wild, uninhabited mountains and camp by the sea. The Long Range Mountains in western Newfoundland provide some of the best wilderness hiking experiences in eastern North America. These mountains also form the highland backbone of Gros Morne National Park, as they abruptly rise 800 m from the relatively flat coastal lowlands. Boat tours bring visitors under the towering cliffs of a freshwater fjord carved out by glaciers. Waterfalls, marine inlets, sea stacks, sandy beaches, and colourful nearby fishing villages complete the phenomenal natural and cultural surroundings.

St. Johns has an exceptional network of 120 kilometres of urban trails called the Grand Concourse Walkways. Beginning at The Lookout on Signal Hill, the Grand Concourse provides an excellent view of the Narrows, Atlantic Ocean and the city. Several walkways lead from Signal Hill to other parts of the city, linking the downtown area with a total of 40 different trails in the urban network. The Trans Canada Trail starts at the historic train station on Water Street and the TC Trail heads west to connect to the Newfoundland TRailway for its journey across the province. More details regarding the Newfoundland TRailway are included later in this report in the section on Best Practices.

Although there is no umbrella provincial trail association, the Newfoundland TRailway Council often performs this role. It is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the development of a recreational trail from St. John's to Port aux Basques using the former Canadian National railway line. Its mandate is to promote multi-use trail development and to preserve abandoned railway lines for future use such as hiking, biking, equestrian, snowmobile, ATV and cross-country ski trails. Other uses like dog sledding and snowshoeing are also permitted in certain regions.

The Board of Directors of the Newfoundland TRailway Council is comprised of representatives of the following organizations: Newfoundland & Labrador Regional Economic Development Association, Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Federation, Avalon TRailway Corporation, Newfoundland and Labrador Parks & Recreation Association, Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Snowmobile Federation, ATV Federation of Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Environment & Conservation and Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

¹⁴ Explore Magazine

¹⁵ Canadian Geographic

Yukon, Nunavut & Northwest Territories

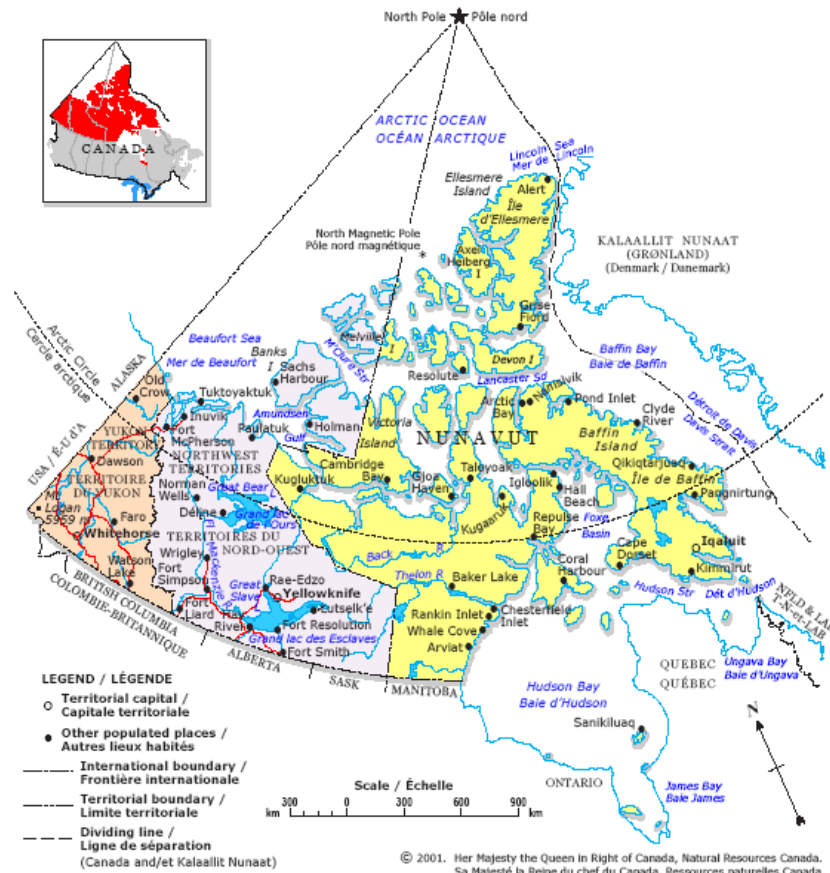
Table 13 shows the number of kilometres of managed trails in all three territories. None of them have territorial trails associations but in the Yukon that role is played by the Klondike Snowmobile Association. All of the trails included in table 13 are part of the Trans Canada Trail.

Table 13

Managed Trails in Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories Summary of Numbers of Kilometres by Use

Territory	Active Transport	Snow-mobile	Snow & ATV	Paddling Routes	Roads	Total
Yukon	0	626	154	0	586	1,366
NWT	28	618	0	1480	0	2,126
Nunavut	0	300	0	0	0	300

Note: All of the above trails are part of the Trans Canada Trail.



Analysis of Urban and Rural Perspectives about Shared-Use Trails

Overview

Table 12 below shows that there are more than 28,000 km of shared use trails in Canada. More than 83% of these shared use trails are located in rural areas. About two thirds of the shared use trails in rural areas permit motorized uses and the other one third are classified as active transport trails.

In urban regions of Canada the opposite is true because active transport trails represent the vast majority of urban shared use trails. Generally there are more walkers/hikers and cyclists on urban trails and, due to the number of trail users, generally it is neither practical nor desirable to permit motorized use on those trails. However, on shared use trails in rural regions there are often very few hikers and cyclists compared to horseback riders, ATVers, off-road motorcycle riders and snowmobilers.

Table 14 below illustrates that there are significant differences between provinces regarding the number of kilometres of trail that are shared use as a percentage of the total kilometres of trail in that province. It ranges from a low of 3.2% in Quebec (where they have a well established network of single use snowmobile and ATV trails as well as excellent cycling trails under the banner of la Route verte) to a high of 100% in Nunavut where they have a limited network of trails that is entirely shared use. Some of the provinces that have higher percentages of shared use trails are PEI, Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

Table 14 Shared Use Trails in Canada

Province / Territory	Urban			Rural			Total	Percent of Total Prov. Trails
	Active		Sub-Total	Active		Sub-Total		
	Transport	Motorized		Transport	Motorized			
Newfoundland & Labrador	8	0	8	19	1,086	1,105	1,113	17.7%
Nova Scotia	102	68	170	82	1,957	2,039	2,209	31.7%
Prince Edward Island	53	0	53	45	400	445	498	39.5%
New Brunswick	91	0	91	215	597	812	903	6.1%
Quebec	273	0	273	670	990	1,660	1,933	3.2%
Ontario	908	577	1,485	1,550	2,437	3,987	5,472	12.4%
Manitoba	120	0	120	616	594	1,210	1,330	9.7%
Saskatchewan	139	0	139	1,410	190	1,600	1,739	6.8%
Alberta	0	0	0	743	331	1,074	1,074	3.4%
British Columbia	2,212	0	2,212	3,852	4,178	8,030	10,242	26.1%
Yukon	0	0	0	0	780	780	780	62.7%
Northwest Territories	0	0	0	28	618	646	646	30.4%
Nunavut	0	0	0	0	300	300	300	100.0%
Totals:	3,906	645	4,551	9,230	14,458	23,688	28,238	
% of Total:	13.8%	2.3%	16.1%	32.7%	51.2%	83.9%	100.0%	

Many shared use motorized trails permit hiking, cycling and horseback riding. Respect for other trail users is an essential requirement for well managed shared use trails. Promotion of shared use trail etiquette by way of brochures and “on the trail” education through volunteer trail patrol or stewardship programs has proven to be a very effective trail management technique.

Conflicts Between Trail User Groups

Conflicts between different trail user groups on shared use trails are generally indicative of the value trail users place on their recreation experience and on specific trails. Conflict can be attributed to perception about activity style (mode of travel, level of technology), focus of trip, expectations, attitudes toward and perceptions of the environment, level of tolerance for others and different norms held by different users.¹⁶

Increased demand for relatively unstructured outdoor recreation experiences is not specific to one trail user group or type of use. Hikers, cyclists, horseback riders and motorized off-highway enthusiasts would all like to access Crown land. Increasing availability and advances in equipment technology have contributed to the quality and quantity of mountain bikes, off-road motorcycles, ATVs and snowmobiles. This has resulted in increased opportunities for contact between different types of trail users and therefore the potential for conflict. However, contact is not always a prerequisite for conflict.

The most common conflict is between walkers/hikers who are seeking quiet and solitude on trails and ATVers or off-road motorcyclists who are seeking a different recreation experience. Appropriate use of signage (i.e. on web sites, at trail heads, etc.) to inform trail users in advance regarding approved trail uses can go a long way toward establishing realistic expectations for trail users and thereby avoid unwelcome surprises.

There is also conflict between cyclists and ATVers because there is a perception that ATVs damage trail surfaces and make shared use trails unsuitable for cycling. Conflict also exists between hikers and mountain bikers, equestrians and mountain bikers or any other combination of trail users. Roger Moore has observed that conflict is often asymmetrical where negative perception is held by one group towards another but the reverse is not true.¹⁷

Trail user conflict is a complex issue that is often best addressed by employing a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to the issues. It may not be possible to completely eliminate conflict; however a pro-active approach to trail management can reduce the potential for conflict as well as provide a framework for dealing with it when it arises. For example, involving local user groups in trail management provides a venue for each group to understand other user’s perspectives, attitudes and objectives. Actively involving different trail users in common tasks such as trail patrol gives different trail users an opportunity to work together and it often highlights similarities while eliminating misconceptions and stereotypes.

Education is also an important factor when dealing with trail user conflict. Uninformed, unintentional, unskilled and careless actions by users are often cited as the causes of many

¹⁶ Moore, Roger. 1994. Conflicts on Multiple Use Trails: Synthesis of Literature and State of the Practice. Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Washington, DC.

¹⁷ Ibid.

problems in outdoor recreation areas.¹⁸ Delivery of educational information in a strategic but easy to understand format can address many of these oversights.

Finally, while enforcement is a necessary component of any trail management plan, it should be used in conjunction with other available tools such as education and user involvement. Trail users are more likely to accept regulations and cooperate if they understand the reasons for the regulations. One of the attractive features of trail based recreation is that it is relatively unstructured. Most trail managers follow the principle of “least intervention necessary” when undertaking enforcement of regulations.

¹⁸ Roggenbuck, J. 1992. Use of information and education in recreation management. In *Conflicts on Multiple Use Trails; Synthesis of Literature and State of the Practice*, p.23. Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Washington, DC.

Key Issues Regarding Shared-Use Trails

Access

One of the issues most often cited by trail users is that they want increased access to managed trails. This could be in the form of more access to single use or shared use trails. Some trail users are finding that their traditional access to trails is being restricted due to land use regulations, development or environmental concerns. This means that it is more important than ever to develop managed trail systems that are sustainable. Education of trail users about the importance of staying on managed trails is also important because often access restrictions are imposed as a result of misuse or environmental damage to valuable natural resources on Crown and/or private land.

Lack of Funding for Trail Development

Finding scarce financial resources is another issue that always impacts trail developers. Fortunately there are tens of thousands of volunteer trail builders in Canada who devote hundreds of thousands of hours every year to further trail development. Without their support, trail development in both urban and rural parts of Canada would be only a fraction of what it is today. Most trail building in Canada follows the community development model where it is organized by local community trail groups or trail user clubs who take pride in their local trail. Not only do local volunteers build the trail but they also manage and maintain it so that it is sustainable for the long term. However, when volunteers spend a large portion of their time seeking funding, they become discouraged and lose interest in what they set out to do – that is, build trails for everyone to use. The best practices in shared use trail building are evidenced by those organizations that collaborate with all three levels of government, interested trail users in their community as well as good corporate citizens who contribute financially as well as in-kind.

Risk Management, Liability and Insurance

Many trail developers continually grapple with the issue of liability insurance. In 2002 Lloyds of London elected to exit this part of its business and they advised provincial trail associations accordingly. The premiums for alternative insurance coverage skyrocketed. Trail builders faced the prospect of either diverting a large chunk of the money they had raised for trail construction into insurance premiums or abandoning their goals and closing their community trail groups. Fortunately within a few years the insurance market recovered and premiums were reduced to their former levels.

Risk management remains a significant issue for community trail groups because their members are volunteers and they do not want to be drawn into any possibility of personal liability. At the same time, property owners (both private and public sector) want to be assured that they will not incur any potential liability by agreeing to permit their property to be used as a trail. The practice of risk management will not eliminate risks but it can identify, reduce and manage them in order to decrease risk to the user as well as potential liability to the trail manager. Most provinces have enacted Occupiers Liability Acts which limit the liability that a land owner or *occupier* may have regarding trails on their land. The only obligation one has is

to not create a danger with intent to do harm or act with reckless disregard to the safety of someone or the integrity of someone's property. Most of these acts also state that a person who enters premises for the purpose of recreation is deemed to have willingly assumed all risks.

Environmental Stewardship

Governments are moving to protect natural resources for ecological values. Our natural environment is the resource at the heart of the experience being sought by all trail users. Accordingly, all trail users should be encouraged to follow good environmental stewardship practices.

Increased Demand for Trails

Demographic trends have produced a growing demand for managed trails because aging baby boomers want more recreational opportunities. At the same time it is recognized that children today are not getting sufficient exercise. Trails are viewed as an inexpensive way for children to recreate without competition. There are also many opportunities for families to use trails as a safe, affordable activity.

Trail users may be generally segmented into two groups regarding trail activities: (a) those who value active transport activities on trails and (b) those who prefer motorized trail activities. Regardless of their preference, Canadians are demanding more managed trails, especially trails that are close to major population areas.

Managed trails are also becoming recognized as drivers of economic development. Provincial governments are now beginning to actively market sustainable trail systems as a tourism destination. Many people from other countries (i.e. Europe) are already aware of the benefits of trails and they are seeking to access the natural beauty that Canada has to offer without having to deal with crowds of people.

Legislation, Compliance and Enforcement

Many provincial governments have enacted legislation or regulations regarding OHV use on trails. While most OHV operators have voluntarily complied with these regulations, there are a small number where enforcement is needed to ensure compliance. Enforcement has been handled in different ways across the country. Some provinces such as Nova Scotia have assigned a team of Conservation Officers to OHV enforcement while others have simply left it up to regular law enforcement as part of their overall duties.

Examples of Best Practices in Developing and Managing Shared-Use Trails

British Columbia – The Kettle Valley Rail Trail

The Kettle Valley Rail Trail is one of the best-known rail trails in British Columbia. It winds through the Thompson Okanagan

region of Southeastern BC for approximately 455 kilometres. Since the trail is built on an abandoned rail bed, the grade is only 2.2% at the steepest.

Best Practices: 1. Promotion of cycling tourism 2. Government collaboration 3. Rebuilding historic trestles

Most sections of this rail trail are suitable for casual family cycling or easy day riding but there are more than enough challenges and adventure for those who seek it. There are countless trestles and tunnels, and the landscape ranges from cool mountain forests to Canada's only pocket desert. It also winds through several provincial parks, recreation areas and protected areas. In the wilder parts of the trail you're likely to spot wildlife including grizzly and black bears, moose, mountain sheep, elk, deer and cougar. There are also more "civilized" trails through level countryside that branch off to some of the region's famous wineries.

The Kettle Valley Railway was built by the Canadian Pacific Railway and it opened in 1915. The Myra Canyon section of this line was particularly challenging to build. Engineer Andrew McCulloch created this stunning section of the route with 18 trestles and 2 tunnels. The KVR operated for 63 years until the final section was decommissioned in 1978.

In June 1973 the KVR section in the Myra Canyon, with its wood-frame trestles, tunnels, rock cuts, and awe-inspiring mountainous terrain, was used by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) as a location for filming a segment of Pierre Berton's "National Dream" television film on the construction of the CPR through the mountains of British Columbia.

In 1990 the B.C. Government purchased the rail corridor from the Canadian Pacific Railway and responsibility for this asset now rests with the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. The Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society, established in 1992, has been instrumental in leading the restoration and maintenance of the trail corridor and trestles. Hundreds of volunteers have worked to cover the open trestle ties and timbers with boardwalks and to install railings to make the route safe and accessible for all ages and abilities. As a result, the Kettle Valley Rail Trail became a cornerstone of the Provincial Rails to Trails network, a vital link along the Trans Canada Trail, as well as a significant tourism asset attracting as many as 50,000 visitors a year.

In January 2003, the Myra Canyon section (from Mile 84.5 to Mile 90.5) of the Kettle Valley Rail Trail was designated a National Historic Site.

In August, 2003, a bolt of lightning struck a tree in Okanagan Mountain Park. An extremely dry summer and plenty of fuel, coupled with high winds, quickly spread the fire into the City of Kelowna. It destroyed over 200 homes before spreading up the mountainside. The wildfire entered the Myra Canyon area and, despite heroic efforts by firefighters, destroyed 12 wooden trestles and damaged two steel trestles on the Kettle Valley Rail Trail.



Myra Canyon Trestle 4 before 2003 fire



The Okanagan Mountain Park fire ravages the Myra Canyon area - Thursday, September 04, 2003. Photo by Gordon Bazzana, courtesy of Kelowna Capital News.

In 2004 the BC Government committed \$12 million and Trails BC raised money from public donations. Over the next 4 years the Kettle Valley Rail Trail was rebuilt and it re-opened in 2008.



Myra Canyon Trestle in 2008 after rebuilding

Alberta - Iron Horse Trail

Alberta's Iron Horse Trail is a 278 km continuous recreational corridor running through Northeastern Alberta which supports multi-uses including ATVing, snowmobiling, cycling, mountain biking, walking / hiking, cross-country skiing and horseback riding (including horse drawn wagons). This trail is shaped in a horizontal Y that starts just east of Waskatenau and runs 92 km to Abilene Junction. It branches at this point with one leg angling 98 km northeast to Cold Lake and the other running 88 km southeast to Heinsburg.

- Best Practices: 1. Multi municipality ownership
 2. Wide variety of trail users
 3. Trail Steward program



The red line on the above map shows the route of the Iron Horse Trail in a horizontal Y shape.

The origin of this trail goes back to 1993 when the County of St. Paul purchased 34 km of abandoned rail line from the CNR for \$125,000. The County was interested in the abandoned rail line for several reasons: 1. it was a good source of gravel and 2. it had recreational potential as a linear corridor for equestrian, wagon train and snowmobile use. The County advertised and held public meetings stating that, once an organization was in place that would take responsibility for developing and managing the abandoned rail line for multi-use recreational purposes, it would turn over management of the land to them. A group of hikers, cross country skiers and snowmobilers approached the County and offered to work together as a group to manage the trail. This management group became the Iron Horse Trail Committee, a sub-committee of the Elk Point Historical Society.

Other adjacent municipalities and counties took notice of this development and they embarked upon an initiative to acquire the entire 300 km of abandoned rail line from CNR. It was agreed that a not-for-profit organization called North East Muni-Corr Ltd. would be incorporated to manage this land. Its Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the ten municipalities that purchased the railway right of way from CNR. Muni-Corr also has the responsibility of ensuring that the trail is safe and passable. Muni-Corr has become a role model for municipal cooperation in Alberta.

Alberta's Iron Horse Trail officially opened in June of 2003. It is part of the Trans Canadian Snowmobile Trail and in 2005 a 165 km section of the trail from Waskatenau to Heinsburg was designated as part of the Trans Canada Trail.

The Riverland Recreational Trail Society, a not-for-profit charitable organization assists North-East MuniCorr with the development and operation of Alberta's Iron Horse Trail. This hard working society is comprised of recreational groups, other community groups and individual recreational users who volunteer their time to manage and maintain Alberta's Iron Horse Trail for the benefit of all.



Valerie Pringle, Chair of the Board of Trans Canada Trail at the gateway in St. Paul, Alberta

Ontario - Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance

In September 1997 the Hastings / Quinte / Land o' Lakes Recreational Steering Committee was formed as a vehicle for bringing together people and groups who had an interest in developing a regional trails network in Eastern Ontario. Representatives were from area municipalities, various trail groups, Chamber of Commerce, Conservation Authorities, and individuals. This umbrella trails group was renamed the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance in the spring of 1998.

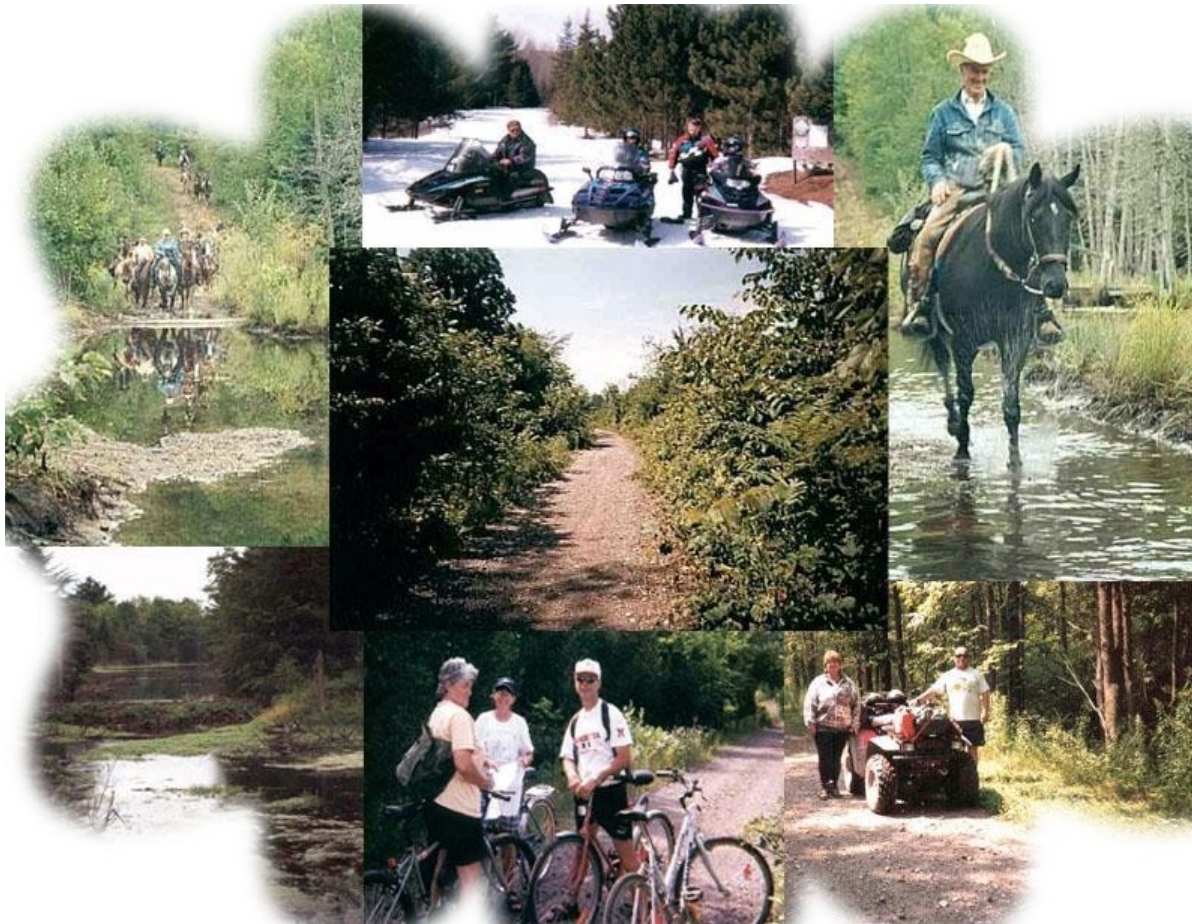
Best Practices: 1. Multi municipality involvement
2. Wide variety of trail users
3. Trail Pass pioneers

The Organization was incorporated in 1999 under the mandate provided to it by the Province of Ontario and various municipalities in Eastern Ontario. The Alliance has completed the following:

- an inventory of abandoned rail lines and existing trails;
- discussions with landowners;
- an overall strategic Master Plan;
- a management plan for future operation, maintenance and marketing of the trails network;
- identified economic opportunities relating to trails and tourism;
- created jobs and
- produced a tourism trail map and created a web site.

Trail Pass Fees
Each pass holder can engage in the lesser fee activity Non-motorized pass not required for persons 16 years and younger Family & Special Events Passes Available

	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Daily</i>
ATV	\$120.00	\$35.00	\$12.00
Horseback Riding	\$75.00	\$25.00	\$7.50
Dogsledding	\$75.00	\$25.00	\$7.50
Bicycle	\$50.00	\$20.00	\$5.00
Skiing	\$35.00	\$15.00	\$3.50
Hiking/Walking	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee



Québec – La Route Verte

Best Practices: 1. Outstanding tourism promotion
2. Government collaboration
3. High volume of cyclists

La Route Verte has won two prestigious awards: the Prix Ulysse, one of the Grands Prix du tourisme québécois for the Montreal region, and first place, among the ten best bicycle routes in the world, selected by the National Geographic Society.



The Route verte concept dates back to the late 1980s, when the key members of Vélo Québec first articulated their plans for the future of cycling in Québec. In 1992, the organization took advantage of its role as the host of the Conférence Vélo Mondiale, along with the celebration of its 25th anniversary, to publicly present its Plan.

In 1995, the Government of Québec announced that it would collaborate with Vélo Québec on the planning and construction of the Route verte, investing \$88.5 million over ten years to develop a bikeway linking all parts of Québec. This initiative required a great deal of effort within the various regions as well as the involvement of several different ministries. The role of the Government of Québec was coordinated by the Ministry of Transportation. Since 1995, Vélo Québec has overseen the development of the Route verte on behalf of the Government. It coordinates planning, interregional cooperation, communications and promotion of the initiative.

In the summer of 2007, Québec inaugurated La Route Verte, a marked bicycle route that extends for more than 4,000 kilometres. This vast bikeway network links 16 regions and passes through 320 municipalities, stretching all the way from one end of Québec to the other.

A powerful catalyst for the development of cycling, La Route Verte carries on a tradition that has led to development of the world's greatest cycling routes:

- Denmark's national cycle routes;
- the National Cycle Network in Great Britain;
- the Danube and Rhine bikeways (crossing five countries);
- the greenways and bikeways developed in the United States by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and Adventure Cycling, and in Europe through the Eurovelo initiative.

People can cycle La Route Verte all at once, section by section or by following their own itinerary. Some people regularly use sections close to their homes, while others make a special trip a few times a year. La Route Verte can be a personal challenge or a relaxing

place to spend your leisure time. Every year, numerous groups organize special outings along portions of the bikeway. When it comes to leisure, tourism, health and the environment, La Route Verte is an invaluable asset.

Given regional variations and the broad range of development opportunities, La Route Verte has expanded in a number of different ways:

- by using public right-of-ways (abandoned rail corridors, towpaths, hydroelectric right-of-ways, etc.);
- by paving shoulders to make roads safer for cyclists;
- by identifying certain rural roads with little traffic as “designated cycling routes.”

Vélo Québec monitors the development of La Route Verte at all times. Once a year, an overall review is prepared. As of October, 2007:

- The route will be a total of 4,366 kilometres when it is completed;
- 3,396 kilometres have been marked with La Route Verte signage;
- 528 additional kilometres are scheduled to be marked;
- 443 kilometres are yet to be developed;



Le P'tit Train du Nord Linear Park

Best Practices: 1. Excellent tourism promotion
2. Refurbished train stations
3. Four season uses

This shared use trail is a 230-km long linear park on a former railway line. It runs north-west from Saint-Jérôme through the Laurentian

Mountains to Mont-Laurier. Many of the former railway stations, or "gares", have been renovated into comfort stops with washrooms and in some cases, cafes, boutiques, exhibition spaces and tourist kiosks. Markers placed every kilometre along the trail indicate the distance from St-Jerome (km 0). This trail is part of the Trans Canada Trail. The trail has been attracting visitors from all over the world since 1996, and it remains accessible to everyone thanks to its crusher dust surface, relatively easy gradients and multiple services.

The original railway line known as "Le P'tit Train du Nord" was the dream of legendary Saint-Jérôme priest, Curé Antoine Labelle. Built between Saint-Jérôme and Mont-Laurier during 1891 and 1909, this railway was the key to regional development.

"Le P'tit Train du Nord" fostered the growth of the Laurentian tourist industry. As soon as the first trains reached the stations each season, the mountain villages became alive. The unprecedented success of "Le P'tit Train du Nord" reached a peak between 1920 and 1940 when its owners, Canadian Pacific, innovated with snow trains. Every weekend passengers boarded the train in Montreal and headed to the Laurentians to have fun and enjoy nature and skiing, the new "in" sport.

"Le P'tit Train du Nord" made its last passenger journey in 1981 and the last freight train ran in 1989. Then the whole region mobilized and in 1996 the "Le P'tit Train du Nord" Linear Park was inaugurated. Train stations along the Park have since been renovated and converted into service centres. These days, the Linear Park operates a fully-fledged tourist industry catering to cyclists, skaters, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. Today the dream of Curé Labelle remains very much alive: drawing a stream of visitors to the region looking to get away and enjoy healthy outdoor activities in fresh mountain air.



There is currently no charge for biking, hiking and inline skating. Cross-country skiing costs \$8 per day or \$50 per season (2008) for ages 18 and over. Passes can be purchased at several of the old railway stations.

The trail is groomed for cross country skiing (classic and skating) for 50 km from Saint-Jérôme to Val-Morin. Snowmobiling is permitted (with a trail pass) on 150 km of the trail from Val-Morin to Mont Laurier.

A free guide booklet for the trail is available from the Association Touristique des Laurentides.

Further information is available on their web site at:

<http://www.laurentians.com/parclineaire/>

Prince Edward Island

Confederation Trail

Best Practices: 1. Excellent tourism promotion 2. Government maintains trail 3. Trail Officers enforce regulations
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History

Following 114 years of railway service on Prince Edward Island in 1989, Canadian National Railways ended its involvement with rail transportation on the Island. The next step was divesting the rail lines.

The late Donald Deacon, an avid cyclist, activist, and philanthropist had cycled a number of abandoned rail lines in the United States that had been converted to trails . There, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, has successfully lobbied, transferred, and converted abandoned rail-beds to cycling and hiking trails. Donald Deacon recognized the same opportunity existed for recreation and tourism in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Deacon organized several public meetings with the objective of keeping the abandoned rail-beds in public ownership. Thus, P.E.I. Rails-to-Trails was established. He saw the opportunity to convert the old rail-beds to a linear park stretching from Tignish to Elmira, some 273.5 km. Donald was determined to see those kilometers converted to recreational use. His determination resulted in the main line being completed to that use in ????. Several spur lines have been converted to recreational use during Donald's time.

Rails-to-Trails P.E.I. was incorporated on December 31st, 1990. Approval was granted, on November 1st, 1994, to change the name to Prince Edward Island Trails Inc. The creation of Island Trails coincided with the formation of the Trans Canada Trail.

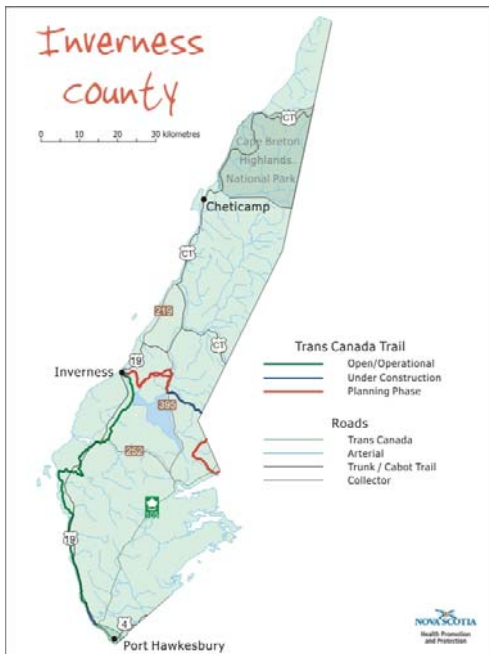
Today

This section of the Trans Canada Trail is a 279 km route developed on abandoned railway lines that run from Tignish at the one tip of the island to Elmira at the other tip. Including branch trails, there are 357 km altogether of rolled stone dust surfaced trails. That, together with the islands pastoral landscapes, a teeming habitat and a rich heritage are what make PEI a great destination for cyclists of all persuasions. The Confederation Trail traverses the entire province, along rivers and through wood- and wetlands; passing through quaint villages. Having little in the way of challenging terrain it is especially suitable for families and those looking for a more relaxing style of holiday. As a multi-purpose trail it also accommodates pedestrians and wheelchairs.

Nova Scotia

Celtic Corridor Trail

One of the newest shared use trails in Canada is a 92 km long rails to trails conversion along the western coast of Cape Breton Island between Port Hastings and Inverness. It is actually the combination of three continuous community trails: Ceilidh Coastal Trail, the Judique Flyer Trail and the Inverness County Trail. The map below shows the route of the trail in green.



Best Practices: 1. Local community involvement
2. Community college student workers
3. Overcame obstacles – coastal erosion



Aerial view showing the beauty of the trail but also the challenges due to coastal erosion.



Coastal erosion prevention work.



Nova Scotia Community College students – real life work experience building trails.

At the official trail opening on October 22, 2008 Valerie Pringle, Chair of the Trans Canada Trail said that she thinks this is one of the most scenic sections of the TCT. It is finished with minus 3/8 topcoat which is wonderful for cycling and at the same time it stands up to the demands of use by ATVs without rutting. Other permitted uses on the trail are hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing and snowmobiling.

For 8 years the three community trail groups moved forward at different paces but they were unable to make that big push to the finish. Cooperation was the key to leveraging partners, generating community excitement and volunteer commitment. The involvement of Cape Breton Island Pathways Association (Pathways) was also a big success factor. It is a regional trails association that provided staff to prepare proposals, manage finances, supervise and provide consistent direction to contractors and respond to the requirements of the volunteer groups. By having the support of the board of directors of Pathways, government funders listened more intently to their project requests because they had a commitment from a regional trails association with broad representation from all parts of Cape Breton.

An unusual opportunity that came to the attention of the volunteers was the involvement of students taking construction courses at the Nova Scotia Community College. A carpentry class built four large storage sheds for the community volunteers to store implements and trail maintenance equipment. The heavy equipment class participated by practicing their skills on the trail.

Every effort was made to involve all types of trail users in the trail construction. For example equestrian input to trail design helped ensure that a safe path was cleared adjacent to trail bridges for horses to access drinking water. Motorized and non-motorized trail users collaborated to ensure the trail would work for everyone. Having different user groups at the same table every two weeks was key to building a spirit of cooperation. The picture below is evidence of the spirit of this community.



Square dancing on a bridge on the Judique Flyer Trail

Newfoundland T'Railway

- Best Practices: 1. Local culture highlighted
2. Promotion of adventure tourism
3. Wide variety of trail users

The Newfoundland T'Railway Provincial Park follows the route of the former Canadian National Railway from Port aux Basques in the west to St. John's in the east. The narrow gauge railway was operated for 90 years and it was abandoned in 1988. In 1997 it was declared a provincial park.

The trail extends for 883 km linking urban, rural and wilderness areas and provides travelers with first hand experience of the province's varied flora and fauna. The Park forms the Newfoundland portion of the Trans Canada Trail. Work on the T'Railway is being carried out in a number of phases. To date 225 km of the trail (about 25%) has been resurfaced, trestles repaired and re-decked and signage erected. In total there are 132 bridges spanning a combined length of 3,500 metres. The longest bridge is over the Exploits River and it is 282.5 metres long. While the condition of the T'Railway may vary somewhat from one region to another, hikers should experience little difficulty, even on those stretches yet to be fully developed. Planned as a multi-use recreational trail, the T'Railway Park is open not only to hikers but cyclists, horseback riders, snowmobilers, ATV riders and cross-country skiing enthusiasts as well.



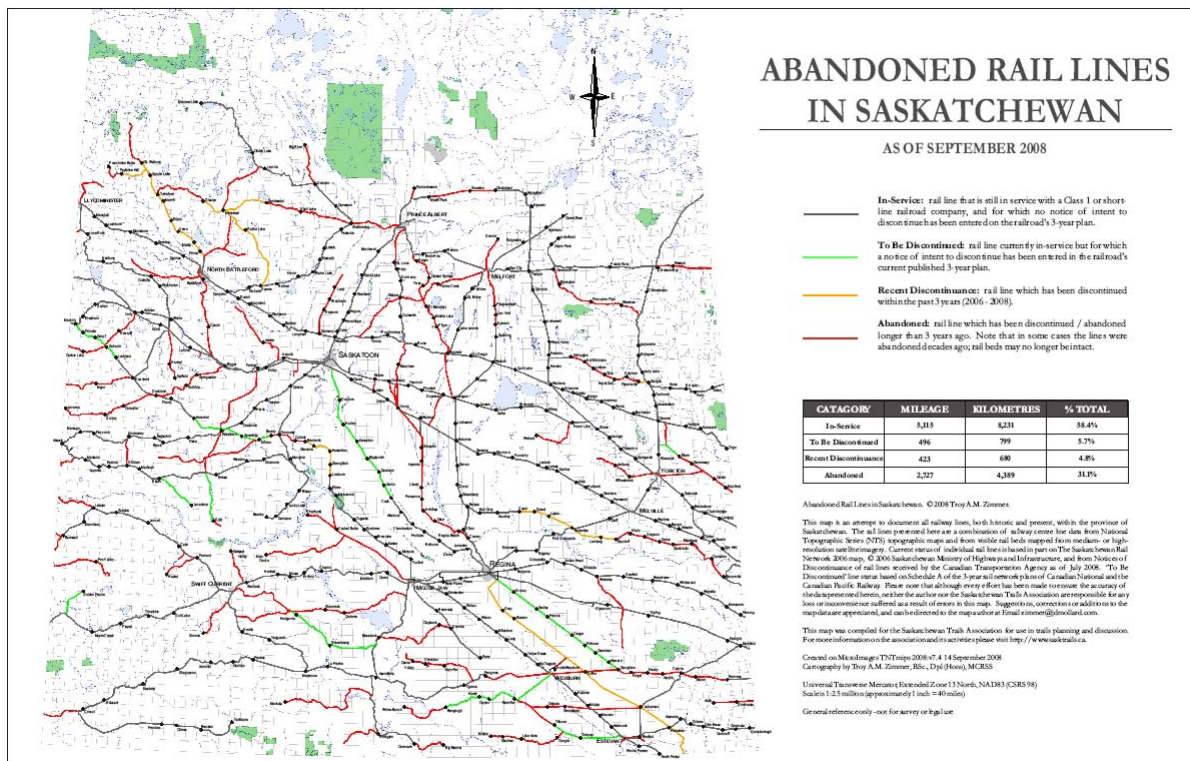
The Importance of Rails to Trails in Canada

Background and Current Status of Rails to Trails in Canada

The development of abandoned rail lines as recreational trails has varied from province to province across Canada. In Atlantic Canada the provincial governments purchased most of the abandoned rail lines and many of them have been developed as recreational trails.

In the provinces of Quebec and Ontario a number of abandoned rail lines were purchased by counties or municipalities and they have been converted to recreational trails. However, in Western Canada it is a different story because there are thousands of kilometres of abandoned rail lines that are still owned by the railways.

In central and southern Saskatchewan there are currently 4,469 km of abandoned rail lines. The map below shows these abandoned lines in red. An additional 799 km of rail lines in this province will be abandoned within the next 3 years according to statements filed by the owners. There is significant potential to utilize a number of these former rail corridors for recreational trails.



The above map shows abandoned rail lines in red, recently discontinued rail lines in orange and rail lines to be discontinued in green. The black lines indicate those rail lines that are still in service.
Source: Troy A. M. Zimmer, Saskatchewan Trails Association.

Approximately 10 years ago the Trans Canada Trail was gifted a large number of kilometres of abandoned rail lines by the CPR and CNR. Most of those lines that could be used for the

Trans Canada Trail have been developed as recreational trails. The Trans Canada Trail currently owns about 1,000 km of abandoned rail lines that are surplus to their needs and they would like to transfer them to provincial or municipal governments or community trail groups for development as trails.

In addition to the abandoned rail lines in Saskatchewan that are mentioned above, there are also thousands of kilometres of abandoned rail lines in Alberta and Manitoba. Ontario and Quebec also have a number of undeveloped abandoned rail lines.

Manitoba is unique because it enacted legislation that exempts not-for-profit organizations from property taxes on land and buildings. In other provinces municipalities have the right to waive property taxes or to provide grants to offset the taxes they collect from not-for-profit organizations. The cost of paying annual taxes on land is one of the key impediments to development of rails to trails in Canada.

The U.S. Experience with Rails to Trails

In the United States the situation with rails-to-trails is considerably different than in Canada. In the 1800's when the Americans were opening up the west, they encouraged railroads to build railways on land that was leased from the Federal government. In the 1970's when American railroads started to abandon rights of way, the responsibilities of ownership reverted back to the Federal government. In 1983 the U.S. Congress enacted the National Trails System Act¹⁹ to preserve these corridors through "railbanking".

"Railbanking" is defined in this Act as a voluntary agreement between a railroad company and a trail agency to use an out-of-service rail corridor as a trail until some railroad might need the corridor again for rail service. Because a "railbanked" corridor is not considered abandoned, it can be sold, leased or donated to a trail manager without reverting to adjacent landowners. The "railbanking" provisions of the National Trails System Act have preserved 4,431 miles of rail corridors in 33 states that would otherwise have been abandoned.

The leading proponent of rails-to-trails in the United States is the Rails to Trails Conservancy.²⁰ It is a nonprofit organization that works with communities to preserve unused rail corridors by transforming them into trails.

The Rail Abandonment Process in Canada

When a federally regulated railway company in Canada announces its intention to discontinue operation of a rail line, the railway company must adhere to a formal abandonment process as laid out in sections 140-146 of the Canada Transportation Act. This process requires that the railway company must offer the line they intend to discontinue for sale for ongoing railway operations. If no commercial sale is completed within the allowed time, the railway must offer to sell the line first to the Government of Canada, then to the applicable provincial government

¹⁹ <http://www.nps.gov/nts/legislation.html>

²⁰ <http://www.railstotrails.org>

and finally to the applicable municipal government(s) for a price to be negotiated (not more than the net salvage value of the line). Each level of government has 30 days to declare if it wishes to purchase the line. After that process has been completed without any purchasers, then the railway company may dispose of the assets as it wishes.

Canadian railways must make a "three-year plan" available to the public and this plan must be prepared and kept up-to-date on each line indicating whether they:

- intend to continue to operate the line;
- intend to transfer the line to a short line company; or
- intend to take steps to discontinue operating the line.

This information is in the public domain; consequently, it would be possible to compile a database of abandoned rail lines in Canada that are available for conversion to recreational trails. To the best of our knowledge, this has not been done.

Other Opportunities: Potential Development of Unused Roads as Trails

There are also thousands of kilometres of undeveloped or unused roads in Canada that fall under the jurisdiction of provincial governments. In many provinces forestry roads are available for use as managed trails where the local trail organization has received written permission from the landowner. The consultants believe there is significant potential to develop additional shared-use trails on unused roads.

The Significance of National Trails

There are three national trails in Canada. These trails are significant because they capture the imagination of Canadians and encourage local trail developers to become part of a national dream. We will review each of these long distance trails starting with the most prominent one.

Trans Canada Trail

The Trans Canada Trail is the best known of all three of the national trails in Canada. It will be 21,500 kilometres in length once it is finished. It is a shared use recreational trail that winds its way through every province and territory, from the Atlantic to Pacific to Arctic Oceans. When completed, it will be world's longest recreational trail, linking close to 1,000 communities and over 33 million Canadians.



The red line on the map above shows the land route of the Trans Canada Trail from St. Johns in Newfoundland and Labrador to Victoria in British Columbia and all the way to Inuvik on the Arctic Ocean. The light blue line shows the water routes.

The Trans Canada Trail is currently about 70% complete if one takes into account water routes and road links. As of December, 2008 Table 15 shows that there are over 10,767 kilometres of operational trail plus another 2,625 kilometres of water routes and 2,028 kilometres of road routes.

There are six preferred trail activities on the Trans Canada Trail: walking / hiking, cycling, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and canoeing²¹. ATVing and motorbiking are considered additional motorized activities. Table 13 shows that motorized use is permitted

²¹ http://www.tctrail.ca/RMC_Report_June_6.pdf

on about half of the length of the Trans Canada Trail. The majority of this motorized activity is snowmobiling but in five provinces and one territory ATVing is also permitted on rural sections of the TCT.

The Trans Canada Trail is a federally registered charitable organization. It does not own or operate any of the trail sections that make up the Trans Canada Trail. In Quebec and Ontario separate Trans Canada Trail organizations have been created to coordinate the construction of the TCT in each of those provinces. In most provinces and territories the provincial trails organization is the official partner that is responsible for coordinating the construction and management of the Trans Canada Trail in their region. Most provinces have adopted a volunteer community group model whereby local groups assume responsibility for building and maintaining a section of the trail that is typically 10 – 20 kilometres in length. In order to register a section of trail as part of the Trans Canada Trail, written landowner permission is required. Also, the local trail group must ensure that the Trans Canada Trail has been named as an additional insured on their general liability insurance policy.

Table 15 Trans Canada Trail

Province / Territory	Provincial / Territorial Operational Trail						Dec. 2008
	Kilometres of Trail						Total
	Motorized Snow- mobile	Snow + ATV	Active Transport	Sub- Total	Water Route	Road Links	
Newfoundland & Labrador	0	181	15	196	0	0	196
Prince Edward Island	350	0	0	350	0	0	350
Nova Scotia	0	326	66	392	0	89	481
New Brunswick	397	0	249	646	125	0	771
Quebec	717	0	648	1,365	0	80	1,445
Ontario	614	243	1,877	2,734	170	294	3,198
Manitoba	478	0	681	1,159	0	0	1,159
Saskatchewan	170	20	453	643	0	0	643
Alberta	166	165	743	1,074	850	0	1,924
British Columbia	523	0	545	1,068	0	978	2,046
Northwest Territories	618	0	28	646	1,480	0	2,126
Yukon Territory	626	154	0	780	0	586	1,366
Nunavut	<u>300</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>300</u>
Total	4,959	1,089	5,305	11,353	2,625	2,028	16,005

In 2005 the Trans Canada Trail obtained \$15 million in funding from the Canadian Government to assist with funding for construction of the trail. To date about \$5 million has been invested from this fund and \$10 million is available. Community trail groups may apply to access this funding through their provincial trail association for up to 20% of the cost of construction of new sections of the Trans Canada Trail.

In many cases the Trans Canada Trail provides a back bone or connectivity for regional trail networks. The development of the Trans Canada Trail was a stimulus for the creation of a number of new provincial trail associations and hundreds of new local trail groups.

Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail

The Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail (TCST) was established in 1998 by the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO) through the cooperation of its 12 provincial / territorial snowmobiling associations. It follows an independent route across the nation's snowbelt as shown on the map below.



The history of the Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail goes back to the creation of the Trans Canada Trail in 1992. Although snowmobiling is one of the TCT's preferred trail activities, it became clear to the CCSO that the route of the Trans Canada Trail would take it along a track in many parts of the country that was too far south for snowmobiling. In 1993 the CCSO decided to link existing provincial snowmobile trails together into a cross Canada snowmobiling trail.

In 1996 the first official section of the TCST was opened in the Yukon along the Top of the World Highway. This highway was closed during the winter and it was used by over 500 snowmobilers during the Trek Over the Top in 1996. As in numerous jurisdictions across Canada, combining the TCT and the TCST in the Yukon makes sound economic and environmental sense. In this case the trail has a wide variety of users because it permits snowmobiling, cross country skiing and dogsledding in the winter and hiking and biking in the summer.

In 1997 the TCST was established from Saskatchewan to Newfoundland and in 1998 British Columbia and Alberta were added. In January and February of 1998 representatives from the CCSO rode coast to coast during RendezVous 1998 to inaugurate the TCST.

Snowmobiling is permitted on 5,462 km of the Trans Canada Trail but most of those sections are not part of the Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail. The consultants estimate that the overlap between the TCT and the TCST is about 1,000 kilometres.

Table 16

**Trans-Canadian
Snowmobile Trail**

**Kilometres of Trail by
Province**

Newfoundland & Labrador	883
Nova Scotia	600
Prince Edward Island	350
New Brunswick	525
Quebec	1,500
Ontario	2,600
Manitoba	600
Saskatchewan	1,395
Alberta	190
British Columbia	900
Yukon Territory	1,200
Northwest Territories	0
Nunavut	<u>0</u>
	10,743

Table 16 shows that approximately 10,000 kilometres of the Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail are in place but the trail is not yet complete. There are several significant gaps that need to be built. In addition, there is a need for signage.

National Hiking Trail of Canada

For over thirty years, Hike Canada En Marche has been working on the vision of a footpath across Canada. The following map shows the planned route.



The red line on the map above shows the proposed route of the National Hiking Trail

Piece by piece, the proposed 10,000 kilometre hiking trail is growing to connect the Atlantic to the Pacific. The long-held vision of a greenway connecting existing natural-surface pedestrian trail systems with parklands and wild places is slowly becoming a reality. Already, trails spanning much of British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick are in use. Once established, the trail corridor will help to protect Canada's heritage of natural landscapes and historic places, and provide passage, habitat, and refuge for wildlife.

The Bruce Trail in Ontario, forerunner of Canada's modern-day trail system, was a pioneer long distance hiking trail. Completed in the Centennial Year of 1967, its aim is to preserve and enable people to experience the Niagara Escarpment and its unique natural features. Other long distance hiking trails such as the International Appalachian Trail could assist the National Hiking Trail in Atlantic Canada by completing sections that could serve a dual purpose.

There are currently more than three thousand kilometres of the National Hiking Trail, some on existing trail systems, others following older routes that await designation on public land.



The Role of the Three Levels of Government

The federal government has provided significant support to trail building in Canada through funding for the Trans Canada Trail, funding for active transportation projects through municipalities and funding for regional trails initiatives through agencies such as ACOA, FedNor and WD. However the level of federal funding for trails in Canada on a per capita basis falls far short of the support that the federal government in the United States has provided for trails in that country. Their land banking program for rails to trails helped to preserve many abandoned rail lines that have now been converted into trails. The U.S. Government has provided hundreds of millions of dollars for trail development each year for the past 20 years through their Department of Transportation. There is a need for more support for trail development at the federal government level in Canada.

Provincial governments in Canada have supported trail development in a number of different ways. In some cases provincial governments have purchased abandoned rail lines and provided support to not-for-profit trails associations to develop them into shared use trails. A number of provincial governments have designated specific departments to coordinate trail development because trails typically involve a number of departments such as Natural Resources, Transportation, Tourism, Health Promotion, Justice and Economic Development. One provincial government has even backstopped a trails liability insurance program. However, the most important contribution from provincial governments has come in the form of financial support for trail building. We estimate that provincial governments across Canada contribute approximately \$50 million per year for trail development and management.

Municipal governments also play a key role in trail development. Many new urban trails have been built during the past ten years and more are currently being planned. The majority of these trails are for active transportation. Approximately 70% of the population of Canada lives in urban settings; consequently the majority of demand for trail opportunities comes from these regions. On a typical day, most people want to be able to experience trails in their own neighbourhood or within a one-hour drive of their home. However, there is increasing demand for longer trail opportunities on weekends and during vacations. While municipalities can build trail networks within their urban boundaries, they must depend upon other levels of government to support trail development in rural areas.

Conclusions

There is a great deal of trail development underway across Canada. It is primarily driven by volunteers and not-for-profit trails organizations with strong support from governments at all three levels. However, there is very little information available to the public about this activity. Hopefully this report will stimulate more interest in this sector of our economy and it will lead to more support for recreational activities on trails.

Since our natural resources are finite, it is important to strive to respect our environment at all times. Shared use trails are an efficient way to address this issue because multiple trail user groups can access the same resources through cooperation on shared use trail systems. However, there is a need for trail management practices to be applied in order to reduce conflict between user groups. Volunteer trail patrols have proven to be very effective in encouraging compliance with trail regulations. Dedicated teams of enforcement officers have also made a significant impact regarding compliance. Respect for other trail users is the key to successful collaboration on shared use trails.

A common thread that links the best practices on shared use trails is community involvement. By working together in local communities, volunteers are addressing the key issues that impact trail users and adjacent landowners in all parts of Canada.

The consultants found that there is a significant difference between shared use trails in urban versus rural areas. Generally shared use trails in urban settings are active transport or non-motorized. However, in rural areas, the principal trail users are generally motorized groups that appreciate the opportunity to use shared use trails in order to access other single use trails for their particular interest.

Recommendations

Based upon the research we have conducted for this report, the consultants make the following public policy recommendations:

1. There should be additional funding from all levels of government to support trail development and management in Canada.
2. Several provinces have selected one ministry to coordinate government activities related to trails because they often involve multiple departments. Other provinces and the federal government should do the same thing.
3. Priority should be given to the development of shared use trails wherever appropriate because that is the most efficient way to invest public funds.

Appendix A.

Definitions and Acronyms

Active Transportation:

ACOA: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (Government of Canada)

FedNor: Regional development organization for Northern Ontario (Government of Canada)

Managed Trails

Multiple Use Trails

Mixed Use Trails

Shared Use Trails

Single Use Trails

Unauthorized Trails

WD: Western Economic Diversification Canada (Government of Canada)