

# SASKATCHEWAN

## Trails Association

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# 2018



## Annual REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

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The key to any successful trail outing is to make a plan in advance. You must plan what equipment you will need, what gear would be suitable for the terrain, how much water you will need to pack and what route you will take. Over the past year, the Saskatchewan Trails Association (STA) spent considerable effort in the planning process.

We developed a strategic plan that supports the STA in focusing our efforts to fulfill our mission and achieve our vision over the next five years. The plan included the creation of new

sector and organizational visions and the development of four strategic priorities.

When the STA wasn't busy planning for the future, we were working hard to highlight the many diverse trails across the province. We accomplished this by being active through social media and other online platforms, partnering with outdoor recreational groups and getting youth involved in the process. We also assisted in the development of new fat bike trails and snowmobile trails in the province.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## STRATEGIC PLAN

This year, the STA worked in partnership with the Faculty of Business Administration at the University of Regina on the creation of a strategic plan to guide the direction of our organization. The U of R conducted environment scanning and led consultations with key stakeholders and then assisted in the preparation of a report that explained the research findings. The STA board reviewed the report and created a plan of action for 2019-2024.

**The strategic plan was released in December 2018 and includes four strategic priorities for the STA:**

1. Continue to be an effective and well-governed board.
2. To be a resource for accurate trail location and operational information accessible to the public and the membership.
3. To move into greater alignment with the National Recreation Framework and the priorities of the recreation section of the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund.
4. To effectively support and grow the membership.

The strategic plan also contains a new sector and organizational vision:

**Sector Vision:** We envision a sustainable, coordinated network of rural and urban trails throughout Saskatchewan which are designed and maintained to standards that meet a diversity of user needs and enhance the health, tourism and economic prosperity of Saskatchewan communities.

**Organizational Vision:** We envision the Saskatchewan Trails Association as being the key resource in the province for trail information in the areas of best practice, standards, funding and usage.

The plan can be found on our website at:  
<http://sasktrails.ca/about-us/>.



STA reached nearly

# 150,000

viewers via the  
*Give Us Your Best Shot*  
photo contest

This breathtaking photo by Mitch Serbu of the Beechy Sandcastles trails near Lake Diefenbaker was the winning entry in this summer's photo contest.





## TRAIL MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The STA was very active on social media over the past year, sharing information on trails that people should visit and illustrating these posts with videos, photos and the perspectives of people who have visited them.

One of our most popular social media initiatives was our second annual **Give Us Your Best Shot** photo contest where we asked people to share photos of their experiences on Saskatchewan's trail network. The contest was promoted through sponsored advertising thanks to a \$500 grant from the S.P.R.A.'s June is Recreation & Parks Month program. We reached nearly 150,000 people through this contest and received more than 100 entries. The winner was Mitch Serbu, who provided an outstanding photo of the trails leading to the Beechy Sandcastles near Lake Diefenbaker. Another special promotion we undertook this year was a **Trail Story Contest** with the winner being Chloe Hunchak, who described her family trail experiences in Prince Albert National Park.

We promoted **Sask Trails Day** on social media and encouraged trail groups across the province to submit their event information. We were able to draw attention to the festivities such as Moosomin Regional Park, which featured guided nature tours.

On our website, we were active in posting on our blog including information on the McKell Conservation Park, trail music, historic walking tours, trail gear, and minimizing your environmental footprint. Some of the more popular stories included guest blogs, where trail ambassadors shared their experiences on different trails. We also continued to make updates to our on-line trail directory, which includes quality maps, GPS coordinates and detailed descriptions of many of Saskatchewan's trails and their nearby amenities.

We also distributed important information about the provincial and national trail movement directly to our members' inboxes through our e-newsletter **Tales from the Trails**.

## MEMBER TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM

The **STA Member Trail Grant** program provides grants of up to \$1,000 available to members for building new trails or undergoing maintenance projects. Last year, we announced funding for a handful of groups, including the Fatlanders Fat Tire Brigade and Timber Trail Sno Riders Snowmobile Club.

The STA gave Timber Trails \$500 toward the upkeep of their trail in Big River. This money was spent on tools and permanent signing material, such as sign posts. The community service club is dedicated to maintaining and upgrading the snowmobile trail system in the Big River area. More than 300 km of ATV and snowmobile trails are found in the Big River area, providing trail users with scenic forest rides along abandoned logging roads that offer various challenges depending on the time of year and local weather conditions.

The Fatlanders received \$1,000 from the STA to support their Winter Fat Bike Groomed Trail Network called the St. Barbe Winter Trail Network. Fatlanders had two goals with the project: 1) To create a well signed and reliably groomed winter trail network in an under-utilized urban forest on the outskirts of Saskatoon; 2) To maintain, prepare, and further develop the trail network for the 2018-2019 season.

The club has been able to create 600 metres of new trail and have demonstrated that winter recreational cycling can be a viable and enjoyable activity in Saskatoon for riders of all abilities.



*The majority of photos in the annual report were submitted by Saskatchewan trail users through the Give Us Your Best Shot photo contest. Cover photo by: John Bryant; left: Jocelyn Sagel. Vector images: Vectorstock.com.*

## STA PARTNERSHIPS

The STA has been able to take significant steps forward by working with likeminded groups.

The STA teamed up with the U of R's Community Research Unit – which we have been involved with in the past on the ArtsCares project and Rails to Trails Manual – to begin research on a *State of Saskatchewan Trails* report. The report aims to determine what the current state of trails is in the province, identify existing gaps, and develop potential solutions. The project will feature a comprehensive survey of trail groups and users. The project is slated to be completed next year.

We have also been active in promoting events for other organizations. Some of the highlights include:

- We partnered with Prairie Sky Running Company and the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport for the **Trail Work Weekend** at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, where volunteers helped the race directors of the Beaver Flat 50 to prepare and mark the trails.
- We promoted a **Sustainable Trails Workshop** by the Moose Jaw Pavers and Saskatchewan Parks at Buffalo Pound Provincial Park. Participants had the opportunity to learn about sustainable trail construction.
- We promoted a **Learn to Showshoe** at Echo Valley Day with the Regina Ski Club, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and Saskatchewan Parks.
- We have worked with the Trans Canada Trail to promote various initiatives, including their signage program and funding guidelines.
- We continued to work at the national level with the Canadian Trails Federation (CTF). The STA wrote a letter of support for the CTF's funding application to Mountain Equipment Co-op for the development of a Trail User Code of Conduct and education program. We also provided funding support for the CTF to advocate to the federal government for a national trail building fund.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Saul Lipton** - President

**David Powell** - Vice President

**Sharon Elder** - Treasurer

**Ryan Goolevitch** - Secretary

**Alan Otterbein** - Board Member

**John Meed** - Board Member

**Curt Schroeder** - Board Member

**Russ Hodgins** - Board Member

**Paul Cutting** - Board Member

**Trish German** - Board Member

**Pat Rediger** - Administrator

**Joe Milligan** - Ex-Officio Member

**Andrew Exelby** - Ex-Officio Member



The STA's ***State of Saskatchewan Trails*** report is scheduled to be released in 2019.



*Photo by: Clayton Knoll*

## YOUTH COMMITMENT

The STA believes that youth can be leaders in our provincial trail movement and due to their enthusiasm and love of the outdoors. We engage youth through our social media photo contests and by inviting them to share their stories.

We are also proud to provide employment to summer students. This past summer, we worked with two summer students. These students had the opportunity to do meaningful work on our ***State of Saskatchewan Trails*** report, helping us develop questions for our surveys and coordinating ethics approval with the U of R. The students also had the chance to manage our social media accounts, create blog posts and lay out a few editions of our e-newsletter. On occasion, our summer students even had the opportunity to go outside, explore the trails and blog about their experiences.



(Above) View of the Fatlanders Fat Tire Brigade's Global Fat Bike Day group ride along the St. Barbe Winter Trail Network in Saskatoon. The trail network's development was supported by a \$1,000 STA grant in 2018. Photo by Frank Collins of Danger Dynamite Multimedia.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The STA held its 2017 AGM on March 24 in Regina. The event attracted trail builders, administrators and enthusiasts for a great conversation about issues affecting the trail and outdoor recreation community. During the AGM, attendees were treated to three diverse presentations, covering everything from trail building to planning family adventures.

Joe Milligan, recreation/interpretive specialist for the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, discussed the guiding principles that the Ministry reviews when making trail decisions in provincial parks.

Paul Cutting, a travel blogger, documented the ways in which he and his wife, Cambri, plan trail outings with a young child and discussed how exploring trails is a great family activity.

Jeff Hehn, vice president/trail ambassador for FatLanders Fat Tire Brigade, talked about the fat tire trails they are developing in Saskatoon. He noted that the popularity of fat tire bikes has been on the increase, and there are more groomed trails available nation-wide.



**FANTASTIC SITE**, the dedication your organization makes for the many trails in the province is magnificent. Keep up the good work.

June 2018 Facebook User Review

## OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

The STA would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their outstanding support of trails in Saskatchewan:



Saskatchewan  
Parks and Recreation  
Association







## SASKATCHEWAN TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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