



Trail Planning Workbook

Table of Contents

A. Concept	2
B. Study area	2
C. Why is this Trail a Good Idea?	3
D. Route Evaluation Checklist	4
E. Additional Notes	6
F. Contact any outdoor clubs and talk to key people	7
G. Call a meeting to clarify your group's vision	7
H. Have a different person take on each task	7
I. Go public!	8
J. Expand and formalize the concept	9
K. Get endorsements	10
L. Project proposal	10
M. Expenses	14
N. Design	14
O. Funding	14
P. Approvals	15
Q. Insurance	16
R. Official Opening	16
S. Maintenance	16
T. Evaluation and follow-up	17
U. Get the group together, and celebrate your success!!!	17

This manual will guide you through the initial stages of planning a new trail. It is intended to be a working document, so use it to keep all your notes and ideas. Show your progress by checking off each item as it is done.

Additional resources are available through the STA website at www.sasktrails.ca

Start out by stating your objective, in just a sentence or two.

A. Concept

Date started _____

B. Study area

(Sketch the area, attach a topographic map if available, or use a photocopy of a county land ownership map. (Attach photos of area)

C. Why is this Trail a Good Idea? (What will make your trail unique? Why is there a need for your trail? What age and social groups will be using your trail? Can you make adjustments to incorporate more?)

Find similar nearby trails, and get photos of them in use. Talk to their organizers. Visit sasktrails.ca for local contacts.

Talk to a few friends about your idea. Keep track of those who are positive and start a mailing list. Involve your community Recreation Director. (Search your nearest town's web page for contact information for relevant committees, associations and boards that may support your project.)

Find out at the municipal office who owns or manages the land. (For rural projects contact Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities sarm.ca; for urban projects contact Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association suma.org)

Name: _____

Legal Description: _____

If possible, conduct a preliminary route evaluation. Watch for problems like water-crossings, bogs or cliffs. Take pictures, especially of the problem areas. (The Route Evaluation Checklist on the next page will take you through the necessary steps to complete preliminary evaluation)

Consider environmental concerns. Historic trails may have important heritage sites which should not be disturbed. Get local experts on the committee. Use of existing rights-of-way is not likely to cause problems, but check with government staff anyway.

D. Route Evaluation Checklist

Date: _____ Route Location: _____

Assessor: _____

Weather Conditions: _____ Approximate Length: _____

	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Constraint</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Vegetation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety • Deciduous • Evergreen • groundcover 			
Topography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culverts • Drains • Low Spots 			
Natural Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakes • Meadows • Rocks • Hills 			
Built Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridges • Tunnels • PowerStation • Elevators 			
Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads • Waterlines 			

	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Constraint</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Wildlife <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nesting</i> • <i>Breeding</i> • <i>Harmful</i> • <i>Endangered</i> 			
Domestic Animal Crossing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Location</i> • <i>Frequency</i> • <i>Smell</i> 			
Slopes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Convex</i> • <i>Flat</i> • <i>Concave</i> • <i>Terraced</i> 			
Views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safe</i> • <i>Canopy</i> 			
Intersections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Roads</i> • <i>Rail</i> • <i>Driveways</i> • <i>Other Trails</i> 			
Access Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Entry Location</i> • <i>Distance Apart</i> • <i>New required</i> 			

F. Contact any outdoor clubs and talk to key people.

Stakeholders who can likely assist you include: Saskatchewan Snowmobiling Association (sasksnow.ca), Saskatchewan All-Terrain Vehicle Association (satva.ca), Saskatchewan Cycling Association (saskcycling.ca), and Saskatchewan Horse Federation (saskhorse.ca).

G. Call a meeting to clarify your group's vision:

- *general type of trail*
- *how it will relate to existing trails, the Trans Canada Trail and the Saskatchewan Trails Association*
- *approximate route and length*
- *type of uses allowed*
- *preferred surface material*
- *theme or prominent subject of area*
- *name for the project*
(A catchy name will often attract others)

As early as possible contact all of the landowners to determine their attitude. Ask them to join the committee so the group can benefit from their experience. They may want a more detailed project description before committing.

Name: _____ Telephone #: _____
Name: _____ Telephone #: _____

H. Have a different person take on each task:

- *research history of site*
- *put together a list of influential people in area*
- *start to consider where the funding could come from;*
- *compile list of recreation, cultural, historic and tourist sites which would be supportive of this project*
- *explain how this trail relates to the provincial trail network and other nearby routes*
- *have a local artist "add" a trail to a large photo of the site*
- *put the research material together into a display, emphasizing the benefits to the community*

- put research material onto a map of the area, at a scale of 1:50,000 or more detailed
- compile text information, with reference to the distance from one end.
- start a scrapbook of all the promotion and support received

Consider hiring a consultant. As a rule of thumb, trails exceeding five km will benefit from professional advice.

I. Go Public!

Meet as many influential people, organizations and general public as quickly as you can. Keep records of their responses. Seek supportive organizations.

Get positive press coverage. Hold a public event on the site, walk the route if possible. Contact the STA for an updated media contact list.

Media	Contact	Telephone#	E-Mail/ fax#
Newspaper	_____	_____	_____
Radio	_____	_____	_____
Television	_____	_____	_____

Writing a news release

Each news release has a few key parts. (This term is more acceptable to the electronic media than “press release.”) Remember that the purpose is to convey the essence of the announcement as briefly as possible. This is your chance to distribute key information quickly and easily to all news media in a fair manner. Each release should have a lead with the basic information, and a hook to catch the reader’s attention.

How to write a dynamic news release:

- Use the organization’s letterhead paper, with name, address, telephone and numbers, email and social media accounts.
- Start with a descriptive title and the date of release.
- Lead off with your name (Acme Trail Club announces that on ...)
- Have a brief (five line) description of the event, including who is doing it, where it is happening, when it happens, and what people should do.
- Follow with a paragraph explaining why this is important.
- Include a direct quotation from the most newsworthy person involved with the event. (Mayor Monica

Dickson stated, "This trail will be even better than sliced bread; it won't go stale.") If you know the person well, you can write the quotation, then check that they will "say" this for you. This ensures that the quote fits into the overall release.

- Conclude with a background paragraph describing the mission of the organization. This can, and perhaps should, be the same for all releases.
- A contact person for further information or clarification should be given, with telephone and fax number, and e-mail if possible. This may be different from the person listed in the body of the release for the general public to contact. Make sure the person will be available and knows about the event!

To denote the end of your news release, put -30- centered below the body of the release. The release should be one page in length, or two pages in exceptional cases. Attach any supporting letters, speeches, or advertising, but make sure they are relevant to the news. Everything important should be in the body of the release. Many programmers find it very effective to follow up with a telephone call a couple of days before the event, to jog the reporter's memory or help set up a photo opportunity.

J. Expand and formalize the concept

This will become a program statement and will be used to obtain formal endorsements and funding. Write it as a one page narrative, preferably by a professional writer i.e. English teacher, newspaper reporter.

Objective: _____

Vision: _____

Schedule	Time Required	Completion
Planning:	_____	_____
Approval:	_____	_____
Fundraising:	_____	_____
Tendering:	_____	_____
Construction:	_____	_____
Contingency:	_____	_____
Opening:	_____	_____

Find a lead organization. If no existing group is willing to take this on, you should incorporate a

new group. An unincorporated group of individuals will not be able to raise money or receive permission to use land, except in the most temporary situations. An additional option is the charitable status program offered by Saskatchewan Trails Association (STA). It allows individuals, corporations and foundations to donate to specific groups without the formation of a nonprofit. (For more information about charitable status program visit sasktrail.ca/trail-builders/#funding)

Have an organization commit to the trail operation and maintenance. *In most cases, this will be the lead organization. Consider the available resources when designing the facilities.*

K. Get endorsements

Be sure to put the positive respondents on your mailing list.

Target group or person	Requested	Received
<i>MP</i>		
<i>MLA</i>		
<i>Mayor, Reeve, Council</i>		
<i>Major industry</i>		

L. Project proposal

Conduct a detailed site investigation to determine exactly what work is needed. Insert this into the strip map. Watch for access points (for both users and construction equipment), view points and other points of interest.

1. General Information

1. Include information about the proponent: contact names, address, phone and fax numbers. A brief history of the group, or a review of the general situation with regard to trails in the area might help the Board appreciate the regional setting.

2. Briefly describe the location of the trail and why a trail is desirable here. Include the purpose of the trail (destination, recreational, connector). Explain how the trail connects with existing trails or potential corridors.

3. Who are the expected users? In broad terms, how many of each user type can be expected now and in the future? When will the operating season begin and end for each user type?

4. Is the trail clearly suited for some users more than others? Which of the core user groups will be accommodated? Bicycle, snowmobile, horse, Nordic ski, pedestrian? Can this trail be used by physically challenged recreationists?

5. What user conflicts can be expected and how do the trail design and operation mitigate or avoid them?

What trail user groups are interested in this trail?

6. Which surface should this trail have: asphalt, gravel, shale, natural, other? Why is this the best choice?

2. Mapping

1. Prepare a site map, using a 1:50,000 scale topo- graphic map as a base. (Expand to a larger scale if necessary to show the details.) Indicate all properties that the trail crosses, as well as the adjacent properties. Show the owners' names.

2. Transcribe to the site map all environmentally sensitive areas, including:

- geological hazards: unstable soil, avalanche hazard, rockfall, steep slopes
- wildfire hazard
- wildlife habitat: rare or sensitive species, fragile habitats
- floodplain
- scenic overlay: viewpoints and vistas
- historic and archaeological sites

3. On the mapped trail alignment, note the locations of existing structures or facilities, and where new facilities will be added, i.e., campsites, water source, trailheads, bridges, underpasses, large cuts or fills, large retaining walls, etc.

3. Trail Corridor Guidelines

1. Briefly describe the desirable and undesirable features of the proposed trail corridor. Explain what can be done to mitigate any undesirable features.

2. Does the proposed route preserve, enhance, or create a corridor with many desirable open space values?

3. What present or future linkages or access would this trail create or preserve? Will it contribute to alternate urban transportation?

4. Are any branch trails proposed that would increase access, and if so, where?

5. What are the potential impacts of the projected levels of trail use (both now and in the future) on adjoining private property owners, agricultural operations, public lands, and communities?

6. If the proposed alignment follows property lines, high- way rights-of-way, utility corridors, or other man-made corridors, what are the positive and negative features of this alignment? How does this proposal improve the users' experience if the alignment is less than ideal?

7. Has permission been received to use all parcels of land? If not, what process will be followed to achieve this?

4. Positive Users' Experience

- 1. What design features are planned that will help the trail achieve respect and appreciation of the land, a sense of belonging on its site, and a fresh user experience each time?*
- 2. Briefly describe some of the ways in which a “limited unpredictability” will be built into the trail. How will the experience change from one visit to the next?*
- 3. What aspects of the trail will make it enjoyable and fun to use?*
- 4. Describe the sequence of ecosystems and environments the trail will pass through and how this will create an interesting experience for the user.*

5. Relationship Between Trail and Site

- 1. Will the trail follow landforms and cross slopes in such a way that the trail seems to belong there? If not, why? How will the trail be designed and constructed in an unobtrusive way such that the trail seems like it has always been there?*
- 2. How will trail structures blend with or enhance the landscape?*
- 3. Describe the site preservation and revegetation techniques that will be used to protect trailside vegetation.*
- 4. What site features will be highlighted and how will this be done?*
- 5. How will the environmentally-sensitive areas be handled?*
- 6. What are the possible impacts of adjacent landowners and agricultural operations on trail users?*
- 7. Is the trail subject to flooding? What is the estimated frequency? What can be done about it?*
- 8. Are there alternate alignments that could eliminate or mitigate any problems revealed elsewhere in the proposal? If so, why weren't these proposed?*

6. Safety and Human Aspects

- 1 In what ways will safety be designed into the trail?*
- 2 How will the width(s) of the trail and other design features accommodate the expected number and type of users?*
- 3 If the trail crosses any driveways, roads, or railways, how will these intersections be handled?*
- 4 How will the privacy of neighbours along the trail corridor be preserved?*
- 5. If this trail is to be used in the winter, what features will be incorporated for winter use?*

7. Construction

- 1. Who will build the trail (contractor, volunteers, staff)? Who will coordinate this project?*
- 2. List all construction features and indicate the standard to be used, as well as the unit cost of each feature. Include each special feature, such as bridge, retaining wall, boardwalk, and trailhead.*
- 3. Summarize the total costs and revenues in a budget. Indicate what amount each partner will contribute.*
- 4. In what season will the trail be built? What role will weather play in the scheduling?*
- 5. Are parts of the trail difficult or unusual to build? What special precautions have been taken to prevent problems?*
- 6. Will construction require a special short-term construction easement for access, or other special considerations?*

8. Maintenance

- 1. Who will have maintenance responsibility for this project? Has this organization agreed? Is the group a member of the Saskatchewan Trails Association, and does it have at least \$5 million in liability insurance for both itself and adjacent owners?*
- 2. What aspects of the design give the trail the minimum maintenance requirements?*
- 3. Estimate the expected maintenance requirements for the trail at four months, one year, five years, and 20 years.*
- 4. Have arrangements been made with the trail contractors, trail operator, landowners, and other stakeholders for formal design and maintenance review at four to six months and one year after completion?*
- 5. What is the proposed maintenance schedule?*

9. Stewardship

- 1. What group will have jurisdiction over this trail for the enforcement of regulations?*
- 2. Describe the proposed management plan. Include the rules to be applied to trail users. If there are any difficult management issues, how might the issues be addressed?*
- 3. Have all level emergency services been involved in developing the management plan: police service, fire department, ambulance, rural crime watch, search and rescue?*
- 4. How will wildfire be prevented and controlled if it occurs?*
- 5. Who will be accountable for implementation of the management plan? Are there partners who can assist in the management of this trail, and if so, in what ways?*

6. Will seasonal trail closures be needed due to sensitive wildlife, fire hazard, or other reasons? How will these be handled?

7 How will this trail be promoted, and by whom?

M. Expenses

Have the financial person start a project budget of anticipated expenses. Getting written quotations at this stage will allow more efficient fund-raising and will reduce the approval time.

N. Design

Estimated cost

Land acquisition _____

Clearing _____

Labor • Excavation _____

• Placing material _____

Equipment _____

Transportation _____

Material • sub-surface _____

• surface _____

Fencing & gates _____

Signs _____

Maps _____

Other promotions _____

Opening _____

Administration _____

(Indicate if the item might be donated and by whom.)

Your project statement has grown to a full proposal, ready to be attached to requests for funding. Include the following sections:

- ✓ Objective
- ✓ Vision or program statement
- ✓ Commitment from lead organization (with credentials if needed)
- ✓ Letter of support from land owner or manager
- ✓ Schedule
- ✓ Budget
 - Projected Expenses
 - Anticipated Revenue
- ✓ Letters of endorsement
- ✓ Site map
- ✓ Photos of site

O. Funding

Have someone start to search for funding. Indicate to all organizations how much you are requesting

from others. Everyone wants to see commitment from others. (A great place to start your search for funding would be to visit sasktrails.ca or National Trails Coalition at ntc-canada.ca)

Organization	Amount Requested	Received
<i>Environmental funds</i>		
<i>Trans Canada Trail</i>		
<i>Community donations</i>		
<i>Service clubs</i>		
<i>Suppliers (materials)</i>		
<i>Major industries</i>		
<i>Municipalities'</i>		
<i>Provincial grants</i>		
<i>Federal programs</i>		
<i>(Labor and/or Construction)</i>		

(Include the fair market value for all donations of labor, land or materials. This will be included both as an expense and revenue. Although they cancel each other out, these entries demonstrate the true size of the project and recognize the contributions of all parties.)

Set up an accounting system. A local college or municipality can often help keep the books on a temporary basis.

Assess the expected costs and the funding available. You may have to adjust the size of the project or break it into phases if money is tight. Projects can grow later when people actually see results on the ground. It's important to get started.

P. Approvals

Obtain all approvals (attach copies to the proposal)

- ✓ *Land owner (obtain lease, easement or license of occupation, or purchase the land)*
- ✓ *Municipality*
- ✓ *Funding organizations*
- ✓ *Operating organization*

Date of ground breaking:

- ✓ *Don't forget less obvious aspects of the project such as signs, maps and brochures.*
- ✓ *Limit damage to surrounding land. Restore any damage as soon as possible.*
- ✓ *Keep promoting the project and collecting all news clippings.*
- ✓ *Have a person document the entire process with a video camera.*
- ✓ *Have an experienced person watch the contractor or supervise volunteers.*
- ✓ *Keep a list of volunteers who participate and recognize them regularly.*
- ✓ *Install furniture, signs, brochure boxes*

Q. Insurance

Determine the need for liability insurance and acquire a policy if required. (Oasis Insurance located

in North Battleford offers a discount rate to all STA members. Visit oasisinsurance.ca to learn more about what they have to offer)

Insurance Agent Name: _____
Address/Contact Info: _____

Keep the best records as is practical. In the future, it will be useful to know details such as how much each item cost, what color the furniture was stained, and who supplied the equipment. Store the records in a safe place.

R. Official opening:

- ✓ Recognizes the efforts of the group.
- ✓ Allows people to jump on the band wagon. Great! They'll be on board for the next phase.
- ✓ Planning this event can take almost as long as the construction, so start early.
- ✓ Local recreation departments often have portable stages, sound systems, etc.

S. Maintenance

Whether the trail is cared for by professionals or volunteers, there should be a formal schedule to follow. Start even before the opening, since litter will be drifting in. A budget will be needed and this implies fundraising of some kind. Key points to address:

Item	Suggested Frequency
Safety inspection	Each spring
Renew insurance	Annually
Litter & garbage seasonally in rural	Weekly near towns,
Erosion	Report when noticed
Weeds	Mow twice per season
Vandalism	Repair immediately
Brochure distribution	Ask distributors to call for more
Advertising	Before each season
Stain & repair furniture	Annually

A chart similar to this, perhaps with costs attached to each item, should be included with the proposal. This will show all supporters that the future maintenance is being planned, and that the trail is here for the long haul.

T. Evaluation and follow-up

A month or two after the opening, get the trail committee together for a de-briefing. Are all the loose ends tidied up? Are all the expenses submitted and paid? The donors and other contributors should have received letters of thanks.

What have you learned from the project?

What would you do differently next time?

How are people using the trail? Walk along the route on a Sunday afternoon to see if people are behaving the way you hoped. Watch for signs of wear (short-cuts, graffiti) or lack of use. If you have a registration book, do surveys to see what proportion of people actually sign in. This will help judge actual use in the future.

Will there be a next time?

Does your trail cry out to be extended, or joined to another route?

Did you have a good time?

U. Get the group together, and celebrate your success!!!

(Make sure to include a photo of the trail committee in your portfolio.)