



# State of Saskatchewan Trails

## REPORT





# Executive Summary

The Saskatchewan Trails Association (STA) initiated a survey project in 2018 to develop a greater understanding of the current state of trails in the province. This survey would solicit feedback from trail enthusiasts and trail operators for their opinions and advice on improving the trail network. The survey was distributed to 856 individuals representing a variety of users and operators including STA members, First Nations, snowmobilers, ATVers, municipalities, provincial sport and recreation associations, provincial park staff, and resort communities. The survey was distributed during May 13, 2019 and June 13, 2019, and received 72 responses from trail users and 20 responses from trail operators (10.7% response rate).

## **The responses from trail users included:**

### *Number of Trails*

Many people indicated that Saskatchewan does not have an adequate number of trails. This could also be due to lack of knowledge of current trails. Walking and running are leading for use of trails but just barely, snowmobiling, ATVing, skiing, and cycling all follow very close behind.

### *Development of New Trails*

The survey showed mixed results to where new trails should be constructed, but there was a consensus that new trails and methods to find new trails should be undertaken. It was suggested that trails “could sponsor family biking days, where local bike shops take groups out for training rides.” This could work if more trail operators ran event days to spread awareness about trails. Diversity in the trails is required, both longer day trails and short trails requested with varying difficulty.

### *Safety*

The majority of survey participants felt safe on the trails. There were a few who suggested culling wild hogs, more shelters in Prince Albert National Park, and drinking and driving checks for snowmobilers and ATVers.

### *Signage*

Many commented they would like more signage, maps, and signs to show Point of Interests (POIs) on their journey. Most people search for trails using the internet and word of mouth with few using trail guides or apps. There should be more promotion of the STA’s trail directory and resources blog as people will find it easier to access the info they are looking for. The info people want to know about trails is their location, condition reports, maps, snow condition, and trail descriptions.

### *ATV Use*

There seems to be disagreement between two groups of people in regard to ATV use. One side argues there are not enough ATV trails and info while the others argue that ATVers wreck the trails, are dangerous and don’t respect the land. Drinking and riding laws and enforcement was brought up multiple times.

### *Leave No Trace*

One Survey taker recommended it would be nice to see Saskatchewan adopt the Leave No Trace principles in all their trails.

## The response from trail operators included:

### *Construction*

Trail construction was noted as being a difficult process with concerns raised about funding, length of time/ amount of work to construct a trail, the use of heavy equipment and volunteers, required skills, knowledge and amount of trail grooming.

### *Funding*

Trail operators mainly commented on the lack of money/consistent grants for trail upkeep as well as the difficulty they face with low funding in regard to maintaining current trails. Funding for trail development comes mostly from donations or out-of-pocket with few government grants and corporate sponsorship to assist. The heavy majority of trail operators agreed there is not adequate funding for trail building and maintenance.

Due to this lack of funding, most trails are updated and groomed only once yearly if not less. This upkeep is targeted to address weather deterioration and signage. Most trail clean up is done by volunteers and eco-friendly trail users. Trail operators seem to have a strong network with many operators consulting with one another to solve problems and answer questions.









# Introduction

During the last few years, the STA has made considerable effort to inventory the trail network in the province. We now have approximately 180 trails listed on our website and market them to local user groups and individuals as well as visitors to the province.

What we are currently lacking is an overall understanding of trail issues in this province and what is necessary to maintain and enhance this network. We have been approached by the Canadian Trails Federation in the past to indicate existing gaps within the trail network to assist with national advocacy efforts. It has been difficult for the STA to assist these national efforts because we do not understand the overall needs at the local level. As a result, we are unable to join other provincial associations to secure federal funding to strengthen our network.

This is also true at the provincial and municipal level. Without statistical data on the trail network, it is difficult to advocate for enhancements to the system. There has not been a provincial dedicated trail building program in the province since 2005. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence about the lack of diversified trail use and funding, but this is the first time there has been an attempt to document this situation with empirical data.

At the present time, we do not have a full understanding of how users perceive our trail network and what gaps exist for them. For example, we do not know if there enough ATV trails in the province, or horse trails, or even cross-country ski trails. Of those trails that exist, what shape are they in, and are they usable by people of all ages and abilities. Although the STA maintains a database of maps on its website and encourages trail users and operators to update us with information, it is not always easy to receive the data.

This survey was undertaken to provide a comprehensive review of our existing trail network and to identify gaps within the system.



# Methodology

This project was initiated in the summer of 2018 with the creation of questions for trail users and operators. This was followed by an effort to identify key contacts with trail organizations and trail enthusiasts who could provide their feedback and insights. These individuals included First Nations, ATV clubs, horse riding clubs, STA members, Provincial Parks staff, snowmobile clubs, trail groups, cycling clubs, cross country ski clubs, resort communities and 4-H specialists. These individuals were requested to identify as “Trail Users” or “Trail Operators” and complete the appropriate survey.

The trail user survey focused on how the trails are currently being used, the biggest issues that should be addressed, and other questions surrounding the amount and quality of trails in Saskatchewan. The trail operator survey was more focused on the issues of trail building, maintenance, and getting more knowledge about the issues trail operators face. The surveys consisted of various questions to allow the public to comment on the current state of the trails, the big issues, possible solutions, major points of interest, and what could make the experience better.

The surveys were distributed to the target audience on May 13 with a closure date set of June 13. Several reminders were sent out during the month to encourage people to respond. The survey was also promoted through both our newsletter as well as social media so we could attain a larger sample size and receive more valuable information.

At the end of the survey, we have had 72 people fill out the trail user survey and 20 people fill out the operator survey.

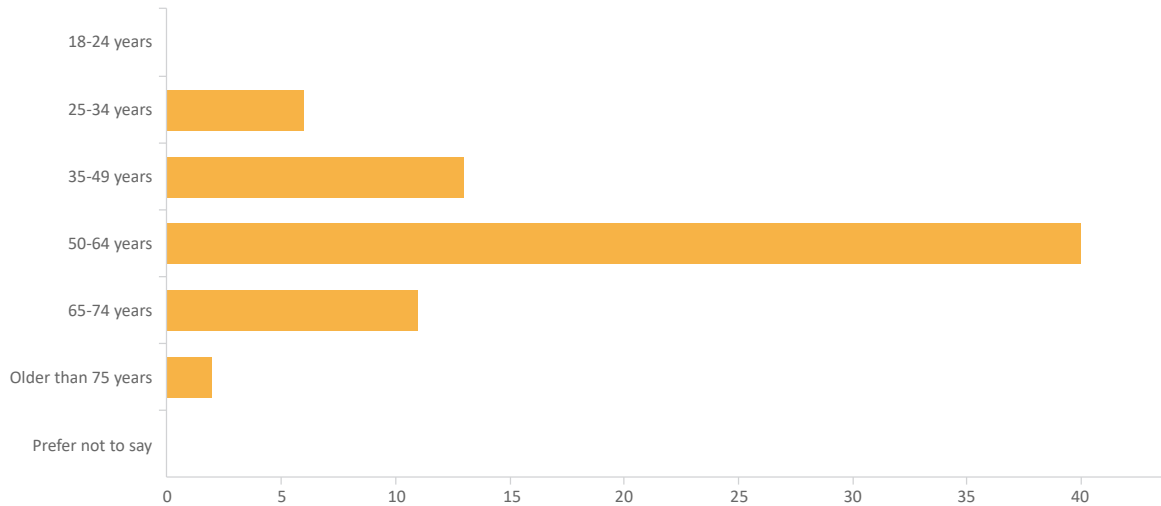


# Trail User Key Findings

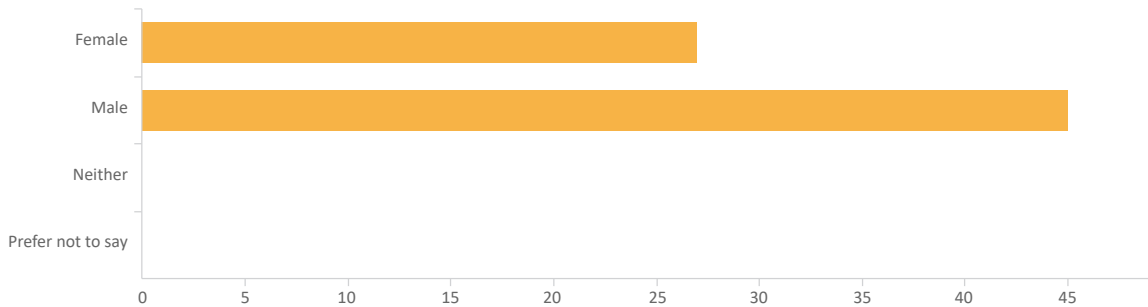
## Profile of Respondents

The majority of respondents were 50-64 years old (40%) with 35-49 years old (13%) being the second largest category. Most of the respondents (45%) were male and only one of the respondents identified as having a physical disability that affected mobility. Approximately 40% lived north of Saskatoon and 25% were located south of Highway 11.

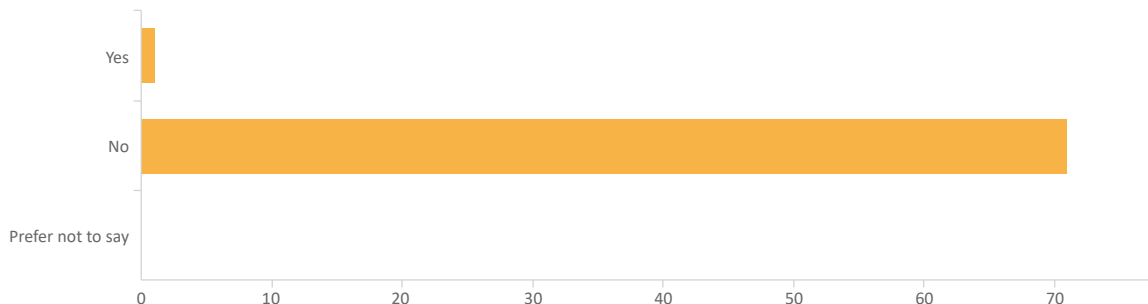
### What is the age?



### How do you identify?

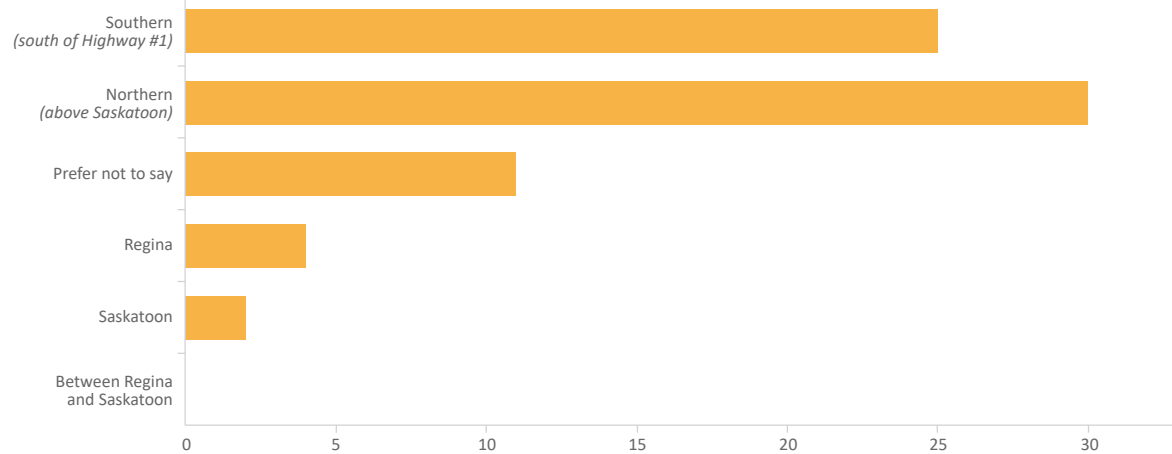


### Do you have a physical disability that affects mobility?





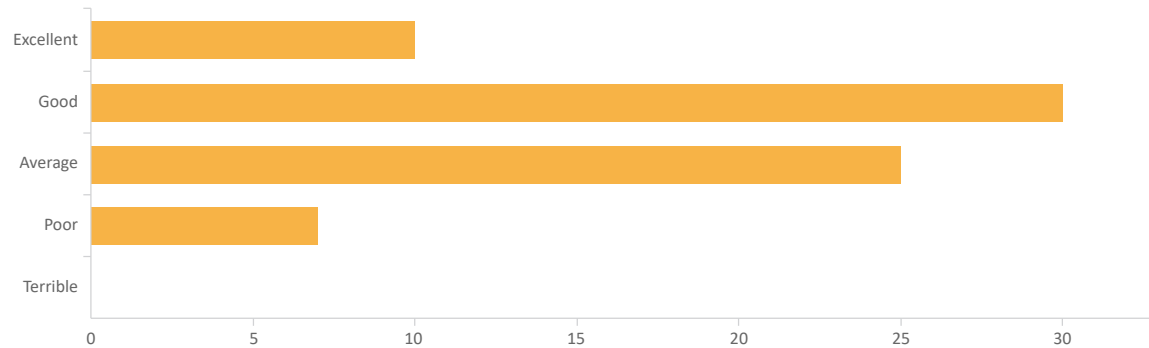
## Where are you located in Saskatchewan?



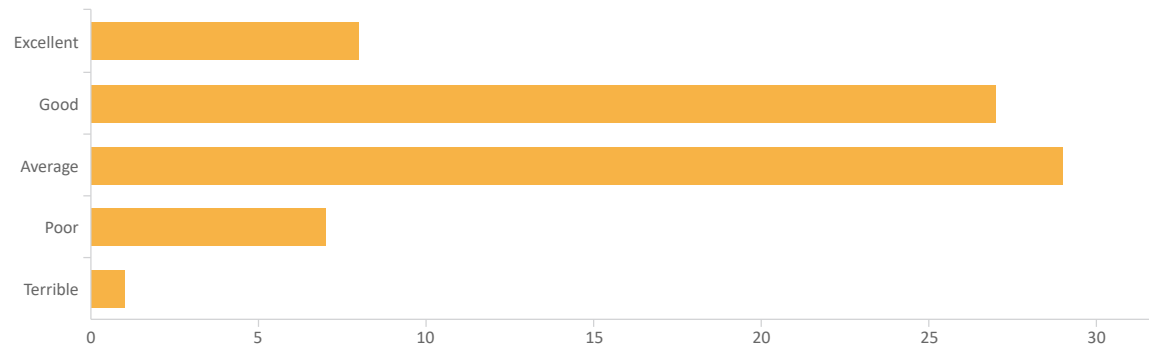
## Quality of Saskatchewan Trails

Most people rate the quality of trails as either good (30%) or average (25%) with only a small number (7%) indicating that the trails were poor. Most people found the general state of trails to be either good or average.

## How would you describe the quality of trails in Saskatchewan?



## What is your general evaluation of the state of the trails in Saskatchewan?



## Comments from the respondents included:

- Meadow Lake park has great potential but no money to spend on maintenance. Portage trails in the Churchill and further north are sometimes in poor condition. Volunteers do their best to look after them.
- Better signage: both to trail head and on-trail.
- Often poorly marked and maintained (except in urban areas). I'd like to see the abandoned trails in Prince Albert National Park cleared and put back into use.
- Keep the ATV's Off the Snowmobile trails. ATV riders need to get organized and contribute yearly like sled riders to fund a trail system for ATV's. There need to be restrictions when it's wet to avoid destroying the trails. They also have to repair them prior to winter.
- Trailhead signage and bathrooms.
- I would like to see many of the old trails in Prince Albert National Park reopened. I'd like to see them set and groomed for Cross Country Skiing and hiking again.
- I would like to see them marked like the Bruce Trail in Ontario so you don't get lost.
- Need more trees!
- Washroom facilities that are open to the public are essential. Clean, safe and open during the day and evenings. Garbage cans also need to be emptied frequently.
- More trails especially in southern Sask and a place online to easily find hiking trails etc.
- I use trails mostly for snowmobiling and ATV.
- Regular trail maintenance is an issue. It's not just a matter of building them and then leaving. Also would be nice to see Saskatchewan adopt the Leave No Trace principles in all their trails. [www.leavenotrace.ca](http://www.leavenotrace.ca).
- Provide additional funding for trail development and maintenance. Provide long term plan to be incorporated though phasing projects on a yearly bases. Possible to charge user fees to use biking trails, monies collected would provide funds for full time trail maintenance personnel.
- Moose Mountain Park needs ATV trails open earlier and some maintaining. The vehicle use on the ATV trails are dangerous. The walking paths are beautiful in the park.
- Clearly marked, with points of interest highlighted. Old school sites, graveyards , churches, historical cairns to identify locations. Advertising to support the trail system, local dining, hotels, etc. Ethnic history from native to settlers that established the area.
- More time and money need to be spent on ATV TRAILS in this prov.
- A specific site where all trials are listed and local attractions or links to local website.
- Extended funding for southern zones.
- I would like to see more snow shoe trails close to Regina. Would also like to have access to White Butte for snowshoeing. There are very few, in any bush trails around Regina.
- More signage that trails are shared. Dog people and bikers seem to think horses should not be on the trail.
- Better online maps to show location of trails. Physical maps at trailheads as well.
- Dog walking trails, not requiring leases.
- We don't have a very great good trail system. The trails in the parks are not well maintained. It is difficult to get information about trails or decent maps showing the routes.



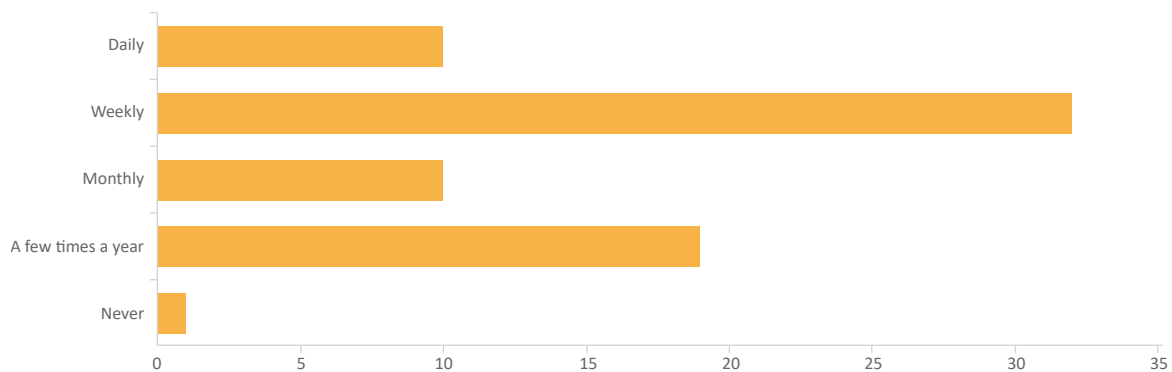
- Often rural walking trails are not well marked or signed. Urban area trails are usually well marked.
- There are very few public trails in my area. Some are excellent, such as the trails maintained by the local cross-country ski club and an old rail line maintained by a farming family. On the other end of the spectrum, the Trans Canada trail in this area is the ditches of roads frequented by oil traffic.
- In the area I am from (Chitek Lake, SK), Trails in our area have been severely damaged due to ATV use. With that being said, This statement is not to say I am against ATV use in Crown forests and on trails, just that I feel there needs to be regulations put in place to protect the forest and trail systems.
- There is a HUGE difference between a stock tire ATV or UTV versus some of the Large Mud tire equipped machines out there now.
- It's easy to get caught up in building new trails and much harder to keep existing trails maintained. Unless someone has the funding to build AND maintain new trails, the focus with limited budgets should be on keeping the existing trail systems properly signed and maintained.
- Many trails in our area are not kept open and have become over grown. Potential for tourism is huge but money needs to be put in to maintenance of the trails.
- There should be a selection for Central Sask (between North of Saskatoon and South of #1) Trails that have a dedicated steward group are mostly in great shape – other trails such as Transcanada trail are not in such good state (very rough – basically mowed Prairie).
- I live IN Saskatoon, which is not an option given on this survey.
  1. North of #1 covers a huge amount of territory.
  2. Condition of trails – I don't use any in other provinces so cannot compare.
  3. General evaluation – SK Trail data base does not work for me, Tourism site is a joke. Of two trails I have hiked here, one has poor signage so we got lost more than once, the other was impossible to find out info about (North Shore in Battleford), again lousy signage unless one is lucky enough to stumble upon ONE of the approaches.
  4. No idea about the trails in Sk as have not been able to find out enough info
  5. Questions, as above are limiting, there should be a space for comments to clarify input
  6. As in the case of how often do you utilize; Sk Trails – once every 5 years in reality.
  7. Walking is 99% done doing errands with my dogs, also misleading to this survey.
- Saskatchewan trail systems are very underdeveloped versus more mainstream areas with developed trails. I feel that the distinct flatness of our province creates a bit of a stigma that has potential users believing that trail experiences in the province will be boring or less desirable. I often find myself having to inform people about the opportunities that they have right in their own backyard. There is a severe lack of e-advertising (promo films/clips, professional photos, etc) that would showcase what users have access to near major centers. I tend to have an "if you build it, they will come" attitude regarding trail usage. If a recreational area has that "one" feature trail, or signature highlight, it draws people in to experience that thing, but then they find themselves staying to partake in all the area has to offer.
- Trail access is very limited for people who live in NE Sask. In order to access any that are marked and maintained we need to drive at minimum 2 hours, with the exception of snowmobiling.
- Perhaps some more rails to trails initiatives. I think southern Sask would benefit from some great multiuse trails or cycling trails through the Badlands/Big Muddy. There is a great history here and marketing value with the RCMP and outlaws that would draw a good crowd to the area.

## Trail Utilization

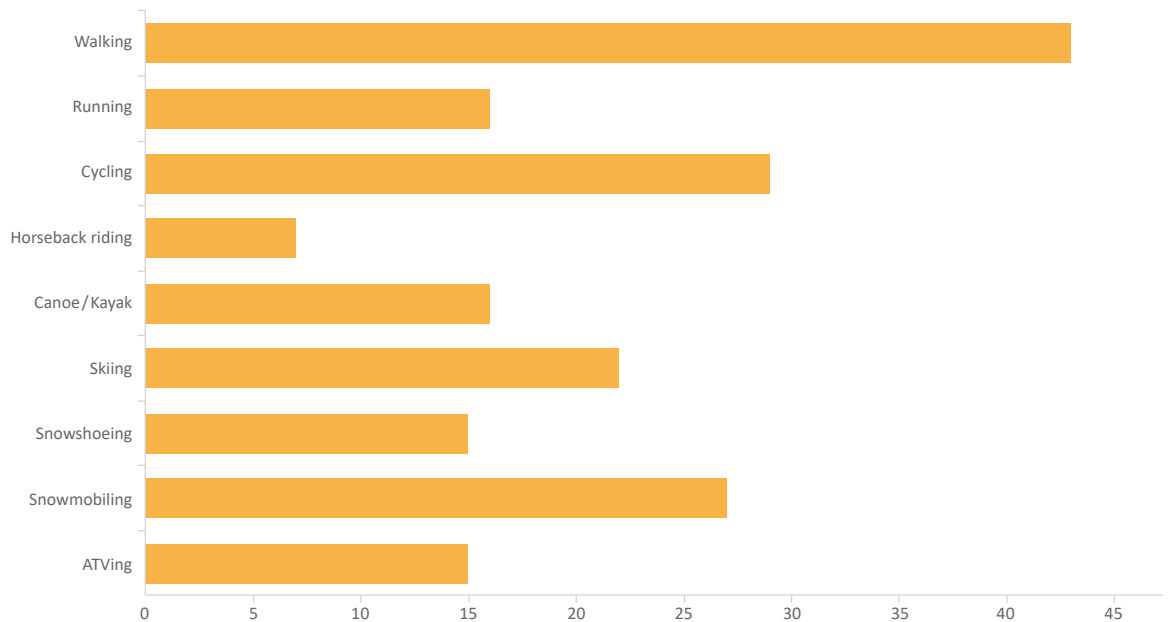
Trail utilization varied heavily. Most survey takers (33) used trails weekly, while many (19) used them only a few times, and some (10) used them daily or monthly. Of the people who used the trails, walking was the main activity at (23.04%). Other activities that are popular included running (8.38%), cycling (15.18%), snowmobiling (14.14%), and skiing (11.52%). Other activities still had a few participants but not as many such as ATVing (7.85%), horseback riding (3.66%), and snowshoeing (7.85%).

Participants were asked if Saskatchewan has an adequate number of trails with the most chosen answer being “No” with 29 votes (39.73%) and (38.36%) indicating somewhat. There were 16 survey takers who stated “Yes” (21.92%).

### How often do you utilize Saskatchewan’s recreational trails?

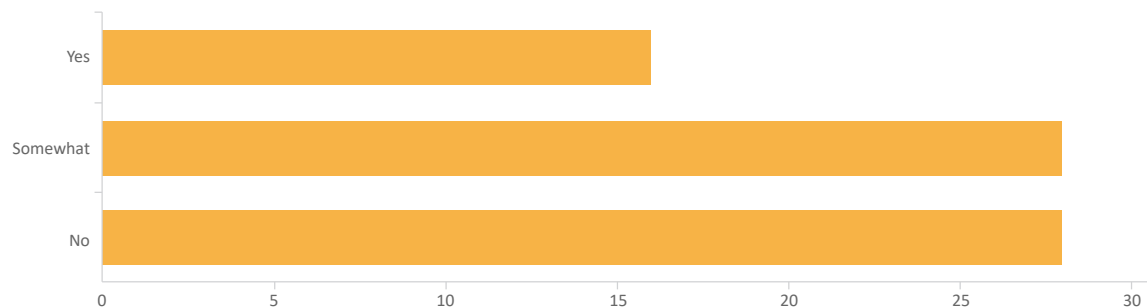


### Which trail activities do you commonly take part in? Please select all that apply.





## Do you feel that Saskatchewan has an adequate number of trails?



### Comments from the respondents included:

- More walking/cycling/snowshoeing would be great.
- Hiking and cycling.
- ATV trails need maintenance to stay open. More hiking trails could be easily developed.
- Adding of ATV trails in light of coming government regulations on land use would be great.
- Winter trails with access for walking dogs.
- We need more trails connecting the smaller towns so people can make a day tours between places., circle loops as it be, 100 to 150 miles. This could accomplish a couple of things, first to help stimulate local business, dining, gas lodging, tourism, etc. Secondly it could promote more traveling by snowmobile and less by truck and trailer. Always traveling the same trails would become less inviting over time, if you had more options when you left home, you would want to use the trail system more often. Promoting safe trails, groomed trails, area routes that overlap different clubs would also increase traffic on the trails.
- Walking, hiking.
- Walking & Hiking – No ATV.
- There should be trails advertised that can be used for horse and wagons.
- The pilot ATV trail program at the Moose Mountain Provincial Park isn't working. By the end of the season the designated ATV trail and also all the others are so full of deep ruts that you can barely get a stock ATV down them. The riders don't pay a thing to use the trails unlike sleds that pay over \$100 per season. The trails are totally destroyed, and it makes it difficult and unsafe to start the Snowmobile grooming due to the deep and uneven ruts.
- Skiing. Please open up some of the ski trails that have been closed or no longer maintained.
- Multi use for hiking, snowshoeing, horseback riding. All terrain just clearly marked and maintained.
- Mountain bike/hike/trail running multi use.
- Most snowmobile clubs are run by volunteers and we are all getting older we need more funding to keep these trails going so the clubs can hire people to do these jobs, the trail system works great for the local business when the trails are open.
- More walking/running/equestrian trails that cover a greater distance.
- More hiking trails.

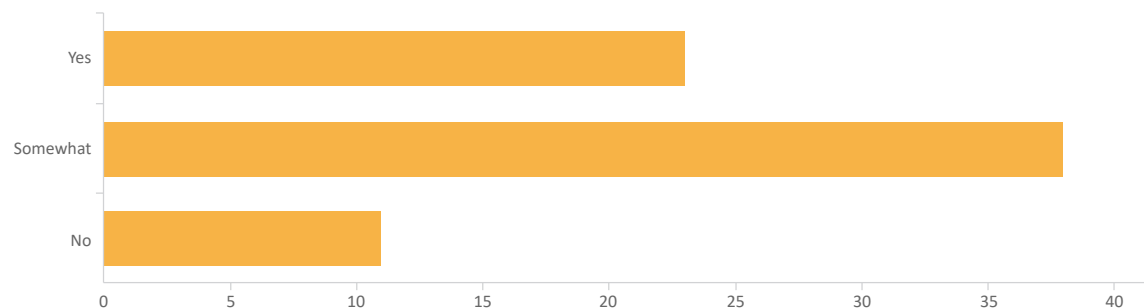
- More hiking trails.
- More designated and maintained ATViing trails.
- More biking trails are definitely needed, I have to drive 1 hour to reach decent bike trails (Buffalo Pound).
- Long distance biking trails.
- It's important to be physically active as per the Canadian health guide. The biking/hiking momentum has been growing in popularity in Saskatchewan, however comparable to BC and Alberta we fail miserably in providing the venues in which these activities are viable.
- In a perfect world, we would have trail systems in every provincial and regional park, the Methye Portage would be maintained, there would be an all season trail into Nistowiak Falls, the Boreal Trail would get regular maintenance and for those more mechanically inclined, an all season trail for ATV's and snowmobiles up north connecting Manitoba to Alberta. As we don't have the resources to do that, I'd like to see more emphasis on multi use non-motorized trails to include hikers, trail runners, mountain bikes and equestrian. If they can be skied in the winter, bonus!
- I would like to see a few more multi-day backpacking/hiking loops. Also, some more mountain biking in the norther regions where there is rock features comparable to BC/AB riding so that riders travel north in our province instead of west to obtain this type of riding.
- I would like more opportunities to cycle from place to place on a trail. I would like to be able to hike – in camp at more locations in SK.
- Horse trails.
- Horse.
- Hiking trails.
- Hiking.
- Hiking, x-country skiing.
- Fat biking (winter).
- Cycling, walking with my dog.
- Cycling and hiking rails should be developed and maintained between centres. eg the Great Trail dream that hasn't worked out very well. 40% of trail is on gravel roads.
- ATViing.
- ATV & horseback trails & marked trailhead.
- As I said above, please open the Prince Albert Trails again and many trails that were ever closed in the province.
- ATViing, permanent snowmobile in Southern areas.
- ATViing.
- ATV need their own trails that are not snowmobile trails.
- ATV Trails lacking.
- ATV.



## Trail Location

Trail location and placement seemed to be alright. The majority (53.42%) indicated that trails are “Somewhat” well located, while (31.51%) indicated they are well located and (15.07) indicated they are “Not” well located. When asked what areas needed more trails, answers varied very heavily and all-around Saskatchewan.

### Are the trails well located?



### Some of the responses were:

- Around Regina.
- Northern Saskatchewan.
- Yes, southern SK.
- Unless the ATV user groups (riders not taxpayers) are going to fund the trails to maintain them at the end of the summer season they should be shut down. Maybe the ATV users should buy some land and then if they want to destroy it by running snorkels in the mud they can.
- Prince Albert National Park.
- Same comment as above.
- Near each community.
- Hard to find all trail locations online.
- Southern SK.
- More trails in central Sask there are many kilometres of old rail line that would be great.
- Badlands of Avonlea would be a great location. Years ago, there used to be a trail network but was shutdown. Great to resurrect it.
- Very few trails available in the SE.
- More local connector trails, to establish tourism in the area.
- Location in South changes regularly because they access farmland. RMs / farmers should be lobbied to allow permanent trail setup on undeveloped road allowances.
- Central SK. By the way, in your question about location, you have two options: south of #1 and north of Saskatoon. What about the area in between? I live in Fort Qu'Appelle which is in between these two. We need more trails in the Qu'Appelle valley.
- Federal park ski trails have not been maintained or groomed in recent years.

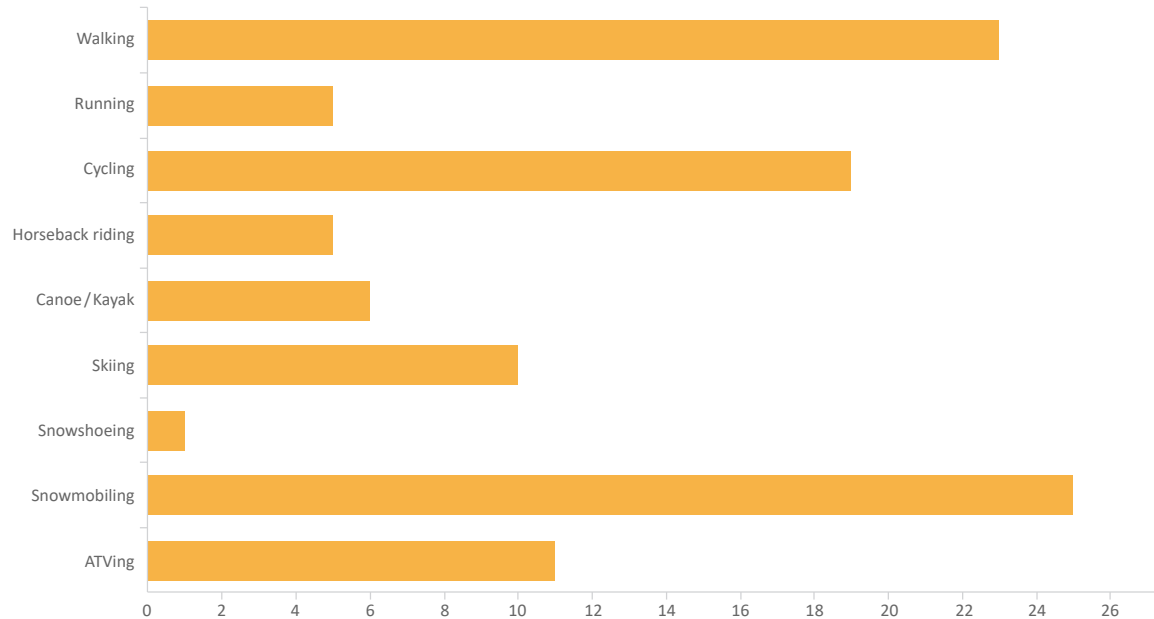
- Pasqua Lake. Trails are well located for hiking and x-country skiing but most are not mapped properly and known to the general public. Updated and marked trails would greatly improve the quality of outdoor experience in this area. General and ongoing maintenance, including grooming ski trails, should be the responsibility of park staff.
- West northern part and west central.
- There isn't much in the south of the province.
- In around Regina.
- I am only familiar with trails in my area, but we need more trails in rural northern Sask (not near an urban centre).
- South Eastern Sask, and Northern Sask., also developing trails that could link interprovincially would be a good thing.
- We don't have a lot of destination trails, the type where you would travel a long distance to hike, run, mountain bike the trail. We have the Boreal Trail, Nut Point Trail, Grey Owls and a few others in PA National Park along with unlimited hiking options in Grasslands National Park. The ski trails in Moose Mountain have possibilities but the many wet areas make a long-distance trek very challenging. Other ski trails have similar issues. The potential for a long-distance hiking trail in the south exists as there is the Saskatchewan River and Qu'Appelle Valleys but no long trails exist. The Great Trail is signed near Lumsden in the valley, but the trail isn't maintained so good look staying on it. We have the potential for a long southern destination trail, and could you imagine hiking from Saskatoon to Nipawin along the river?! The last stretch would be through the forest of Fort a la Corne for a wilderness experience. Having said that, Fort a la Corne has some amazing places including an underground stable with stalls for the horses that would have been used in the 40's? when they were logging with horses. The wooden stairs leading underground have been dented by the weight of the animals going up and down. While there is a myriad of old forestry roads in this area, there is no hiking trail but amazing potential.
- Pasqua Lake Long Lake.
- North east Saskatchewan has many trails, but they are not advertised or marker.
- LA Ronge and Missinipe would be prime targets for more year-round recreational riding trails (mtn and fat bike). Would be great to see the trail network that used to be in North Battleford resurrected.
- No idea, finding any info takes a lot of clicks, I would rather go riding than sit in front of the computer trying to deal with convoluted and confusing sites, not one of which is truly comprehensive.
- Buffalo Pound has a wonderful basic trail system, and the area is increasing in popularity and usage all the time. Most users are local, but there is real potential, given the size of the park, for further trail development that could lead to BP becoming a legitimate trail experience destination. Currently the park has enough trails to keep the user base busy for a single day, but it falls short of being a multi day destination.
- Pockets where there are no trails to link communities.
- North east Saskatchewan.
- More badlands trails, rail to trail.



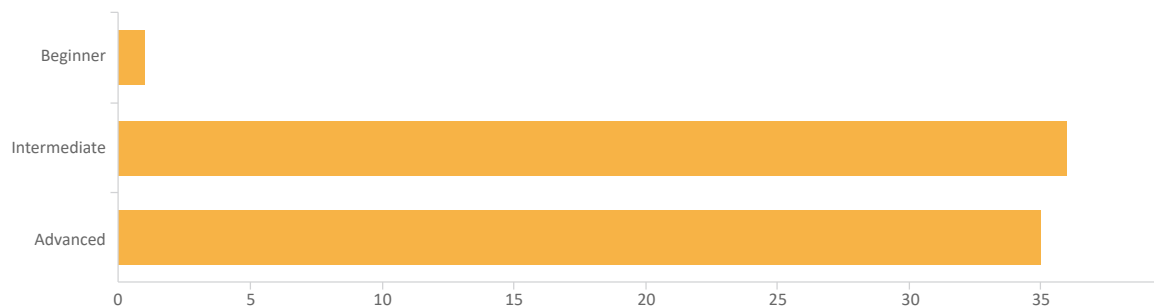
## Trail Activities

Favorite trail activities were led by walking and snowmobiling (22.64% and 23.58%), with cycling, skiing, and ATVing all following (around 10-15%). Most participants were either intermediate (50.68%) or advanced (47.95%) at their favorite trail activities with very few beginners (1.37%). Individuals were very split when asked if they believe Saskatchewan has enough trails suited to their skill level (53% yes vs 47% said no).

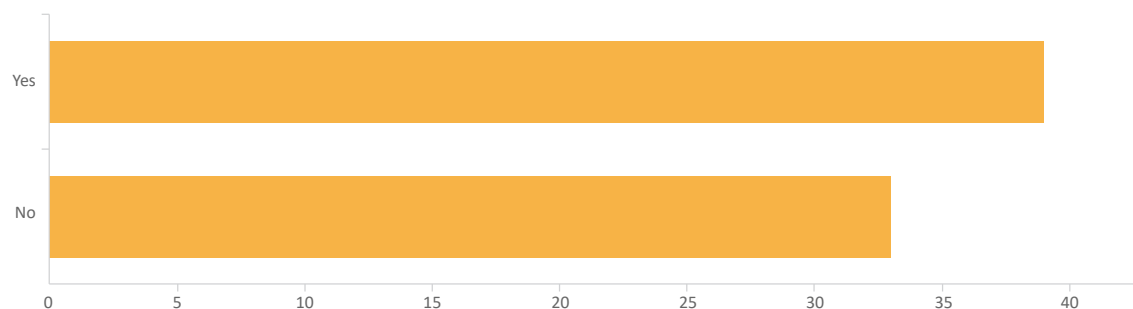
### What is your favourite trail activity?



### For your favourite trail activity, what level do you feel that you are at?



### Do you feel that there enough trails in the province suited to your skill level?



## **When asked what type of trails they would like to see or be modified, some of the answers were:**

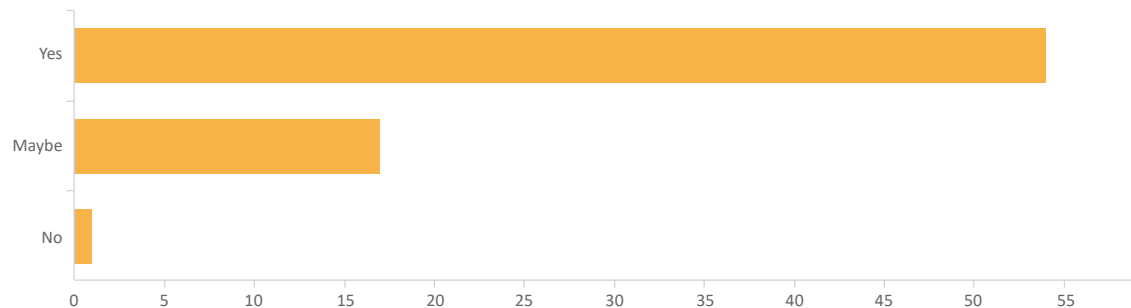
- Safe cycling trails from Saskatoon to the outskirts. eg Valley Road or to the Whitecap Dakota casino or to Humboldt.
- Actually, just maintain existing trails in PANP. Specifically, the Elk, Freight, and Anglin Lake (inside the park).
- Same comment as above.
- Long distance (multi-day) hiking/walking trails that are suitable for families with young children (ie off-road).
- Again, just more trails in general.
- More accessible information on where the trails are & if they are multi use trails. Trailhead for unloading ATV & horses.
- More ATV trails old rail lines.
- More overnight backpacking trails.
- The problem with trails in Saskatchewan is that their numbers are limited, so you have all skill levels using the same trails, which makes them unsafe and dangerous. Trails that are of the advanced nature need to be identified as such.
- There is not enough a trail.
- Need more ATV trails in southern Sask.
- Echo Park has hills, but all the ski trails are up top – flat. Try to incorporate some vertical.
- Need ATV trails.
- Linking west central and west northern more trails.
- Most trails are rather short. Would like to see a more extensive system.
- More trails in general covering a greater distance.
- As stated above.
- Keep in mind that I am part of a very small percentage of the trail users but what I am looking for is a trail system where I can make a day of running it. Grey Owls is awesome, Nut Point is challenging and fun, the Boreal Trail has been out of commission due to downed trees and I need to go look at the east and west blocks of Grasslands and see what it would be like to go from the east side of the east block, all the way to Val Marie.
- There needs to be an alliance created between the biking community and the parks board, we need to create at least one new trail every year, this will increase ridership and reduce boredom from riding the same trails every year. Building trails is not harmful to the environment – if you leave a trail for one full year, the next year it is so grown in you don't even know it existed.
- More trails in the North with rocks and root similar to what is found in the mountains. More groomed winter trails located throughout the province there are NONE, riders make their own. Possibly one could count Saskatchewan Landing & the Nisbet Forest.
- Challenging trail features are a highlight to any advanced user. Jumps, berms, rock features and drops are common sights in more developed trail centers. Saskatchewan trails are very “old school” in terms of a lack of new features such as those listed above.

- I feel they exist, just not locally enough for more accessible/affordable enjoyment.
- Yes and no. The mountain biking trails are certainly at my level or above in spots. What I'd like to see is trails that are more multi-use for cycling. The genre of cycling that is exploding right now is 'gravel cycling' and this is an endurance style of cycling. So, rail to trail type projects would suit this style of riding perfectly and also make the trail multi-use. The issue with Sask is that their rail usually goes across bald prairie which may not always draw a crowd. So, it would need some research. Also just laying out a route using grid roads/paved roads is entirely acceptable for this style of cycling.

## Trail Safety

The majority of respondents felt safe on Saskatchewan trails (75.34%). A few people felt "Maybe" safe on the trails (23.29%) and only one person voted that they did not feel safe on the trails.

### Do you feel safe on trails in Saskatchewan?



### The concerns from those who did not feel as safe on the trails were:

- Need to enforce drinking and riding. There is still way to many Snowmobile and ATV riders drinking and riding.
- Enclosed shelters in PANP.
- I am worried about the increase of Wild Hogs throughout our province. It would be good to know where they are and told what can be done about them if encountered.
- Carry a phone, whistle and advisor family of the route.
- Regularly patrolled trails.
- To many holes in a lot of trails.
- Trail difficulty, directional specific trails, currently most of the trails are multi direction. Adding additional trails which are designated as up/down only would reduce the hazard of collisions.
- Cull the wild hog population.
- Generally, feel safe, but if injured or lost etc., getting help may be an issue.
- I only feel unsafe when sharing areas with cattle.
- Better mapping.
- I have a major problem with trail maintenance (Buffalo Pound) 10 years ago I contracted poison ivy at Buffalo Pound while I was maintaining the trails, now every time I come into contact with poison ivy or nettle I have a severe reaction, so bad that I can no longer offer my help trimming trails. I would like to offer a solution: have the bikers contribute extra cash when they purchase their park pass, then hire a summer student to do nothing but trim trails all summer long. I would gladly pay for this service.

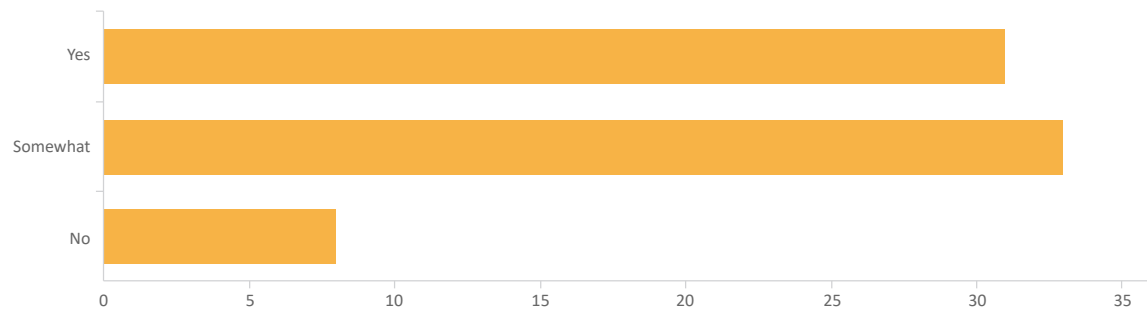


- ATV trails need work to become safer. currently a large safety concern.
- Some measures can/should be taken regarding trail usage direction of travel. Steep, primarily downhill trails can become a hazard if users are climbing them; the same is true in the reverse.

## Trail Signage

There was little consensus among respondents regarding how well marked the trails are in Saskatchewan. 42.5% of survey takers answered yes, while 45.2% answered maybe, and 12.33% answered no.

### Are the trails you've used in Saskatchewan well-marked?



### When asked further about the lacking signage, the answers were:

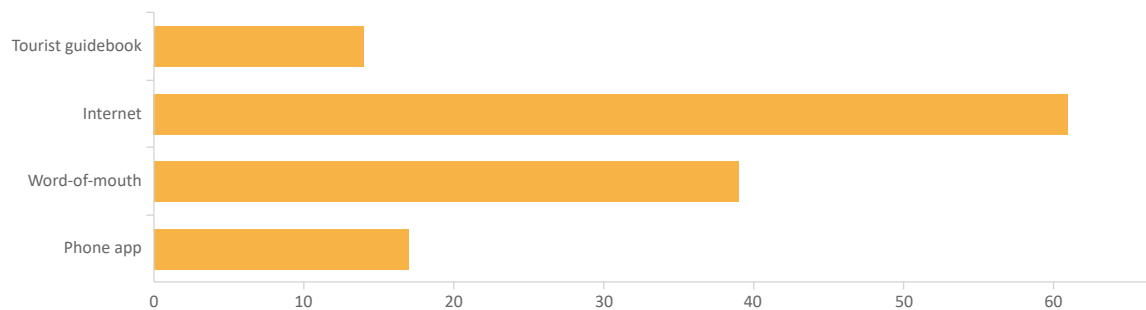
- Maps in the winter for cross country skiing at Elkridge are really inadequate. Every year we comment about them and they never change. the Great Trail is not marked well in the Saskatoon area. (particularly from Wanuskewin to Alberta boarder) GPS app is good.
- Maps, route marking. Wildlife, historical or other interpretive signs would be a bonus.
- Maps.
- Wildlife notices.
- Maps for trails outside of major cities.
- Blazes on trees – maps.
- Maps – hard to tell which trail you are on. Need better markers.
- Distances, maps, whether washroom facilities are open and available.
- Maybe a sign at crossroads to at least give the direction it is going. E.g. North, south etc. Closest town. Sometimes accidents happen & you can get disoriented trying to get to help.
- More signage required, updates to existing are required.
- ATV signage in the park needs improvement.
- Quad trails need marking, sled trails are great.
- Maps, wildlife.
- X-Country ski trails are mapped in Echo Valley Prov Park but limited maps available. No trail markings or maps for walking/running/cycling single track trails.
- Most markers are old, and signage is worn off. Maps very hard to follow because of this
- Maps at all junctions.

- Snowmobile. Trails EXCELLENT!!! ATV trails very poor.
- All of the above for Pasqua Lake.
- There aren't good maps, and some trails have not been maintained in years, so the markers have been lost.
- The Saskatchewan Snowmobile assoc. has done a tremendous job with Trail signage in the winter months.
- The major trails are really well marked and sometimes on the lesser used ski trails or hiking trails, the signage can be missing but that's half the fun.
- Trails that have a dedicated user group seem to be well marked – others contain very little markings (i.e.. Saskatoon river valley trail).
- Better maintenance.
- Trails are often rerouted, renovated or changed, so easy to edit and replace maps should be considered. For instance, the Trail Forks application allows for user generated GPS routes and maps to be generated. These maps could be printed and posted in a "shadow box" at trail heads and at trail markers. I would even go so far as to suggest that the app developer may be willing to help fund such a project as to help promote their application.

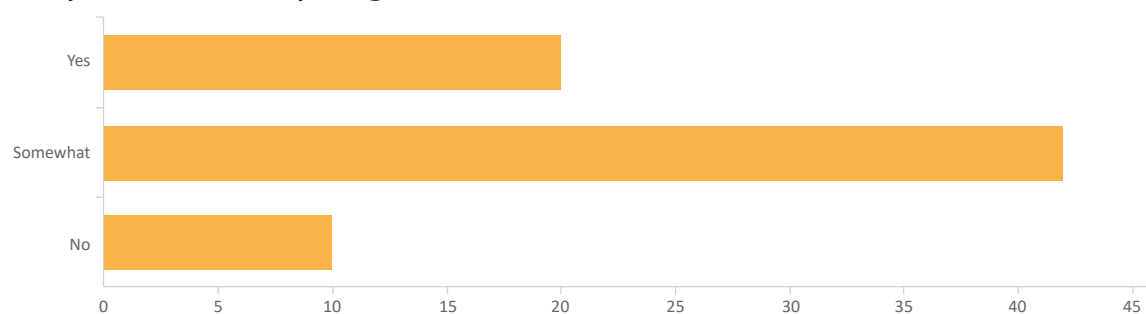
### Trail Information

Trail information is sought out through various means with the internet (46.27%) leading the way. Word of mouth (29%) and phone apps (13.43%) follow, while only a few people use tourism guidebooks (11.2%). Although there is a plethora of information online and in the community, only 27.5% of people find it easy to find information on trails in Saskatchewan, 57.5% of people find it "somewhat" easy to find information and 15% of respondents said it was not easy to find information.

### When you are seeking out information about a trail in Saskatchewan, which resource do you utilize? Please select all that apply.



### Do you find it easy to get information on trails in Saskatchewan?



## Some of the information being searched for by survey takers is:

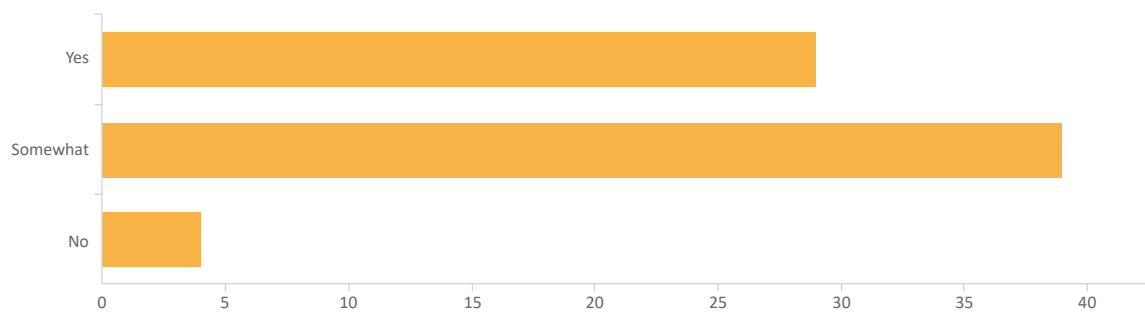
- Website.
- Snowmobile trails excellent and easy to find but ATVing trails not so easy.
- Tourist information is usually not specific enough regarding distance and facilities.
- A concise One-Stop internet check.
- Where to park and where to access trailheads.
- Snow and trail condition reports.
- It easy to find trails online with proper maps and locations.
- Horseback & ATV trails are lacking acknowledgement. We need trailhead for unloading nothing is ever mentioned where these are.
- Don't know where to find it.
- Paper maps available at park booths.
- Snow conditions.
- Very little info on ATV trails.
- Trail descriptions and maps.
- As a trail runner, I am always looking for new trails to try and for the most part, the info is out there somewhere. Just got to find it.
- As above... to gain what little info was possible, two of us spent a total of 6 hours to gather useless info on the North Shore. If my friend, who lives near Battleford, had not heard about it, we would never have considered trying to walk it.
- More electronic promotion is needed. Digital is the way users research nowadays, almost 100% in my opinion.
- The SSA internet trail web page needs show current conditions/trail reports in a live format. i.e.: bridge out at Clark's Crossing 2 miles south of Timbuctoo.
- Trail forks is good but missing data, Sask tourism websites don't have the greatest trail maps as they leave a lot to be desired. Then after that you are left searching the net for hidden local resources or privately-run websites that provide information on trails.

## *Environmental Concerns*

Trail users find that other Saskatchewan trail users are respectful of the environment with the majority saying somewhat (53.4%) and yes (41.1%) and only a handful of people saying no (5.4%). Most of the concerns were directed towards ATV users.



## In your opinion, are Saskatchewan trail users thoughtful of the environment?



### Some of the other responses and possible solutions were:

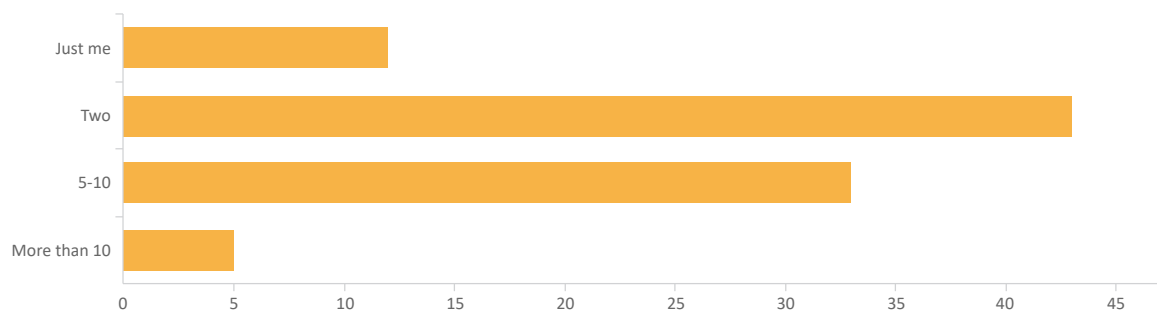
- Need greater ATV enforcement in delicate habitats Require trails that display delicate habitat and protected area Require more information (public awareness) environmental impact on riding damages off trail in sensitive habitat areas.
- Education, garbage and recycling bins at least at trail heads.
- A high number of Quad riders generally do not respect the land.
- Signage.
- I guess increase signage public education or the best ways. Adequate human waste disposals there's a lot of Kleenex around the trails in some places.
- A few more garbage cans.
- ATVers some like to play in the mud, & make a mess of the trail etc. Maybe assign a certain area for these types to play. Most of this type aren't out to enjoy the whole day of site seeing they just play for an hour in the mud & water. Also building bridges to keep people from crossing wet areas.
- As mentioned before, Leave No Trace.
- Increased Public education, signage.
- Education and enforcement. Provincial Gov needs to bring in a do not litter campaign.
- As an avid snowmobiler, we care for the environment, waste either packed in and out or disposed of in the proper places.
- Some people are just plain inconsiderate when it comes to littering. Totally ignorant!! I find this is truer with ATVers.
- More garbage containers needed.
- Increased signage and BAN All ATV RALLIES. Too much damage to environment from very high usage in short period of timing.
- ATV damage trails they NEED their own parks or trails not using other trails and damaging them
- The local ski club often has trouble with snowmobilers and ATVers trespassing on its trails. The ATVs damage the landscape, as there are bogs. The trails are marked (no ATVS/snowmobiles) and on private land. I do not know what the practical solution is to this issue.

- Limitations put in place for ATV access on crown land trails and also ATV/UTV tire size and Lug type limitations implemented.
- There is always somebody trying to ruin a good thing for everybody. Just need everyone who is around those types of people to speak up, so they understand.
- ATV's are good and bad. They open up areas for me to run but they leave deep ruts and their beer cans by the inconsiderate minority. Snowmobiles do far less damage, but they still have their minority who toss their garbage after hauling out on the trail. The majority of motorized trail users and a higher percentage of foot powered users take care of the trails. How we educate the rest is still up for debate.
- Most are very thoughtful – there is still a strong undertow of folks that seem to think they can just modify trails to suit their needs, so trees are being cut and jumps being made, and trails altered to change their original intend. Increased signage as to the penalties for modifying or damaging (motorbike/ATV's on mtn bike trails), trail cams. etc.
- Sure, better computer access too.
- Increased signage and appropriate waste disposal containers.
- I think that non-motorized trail users are. I have only seen disrespect and damage done by off road vehicle trail users. They also contribute to noise pollution. It's a tough subject to balance as these trail users bring big money to our tourism industry.

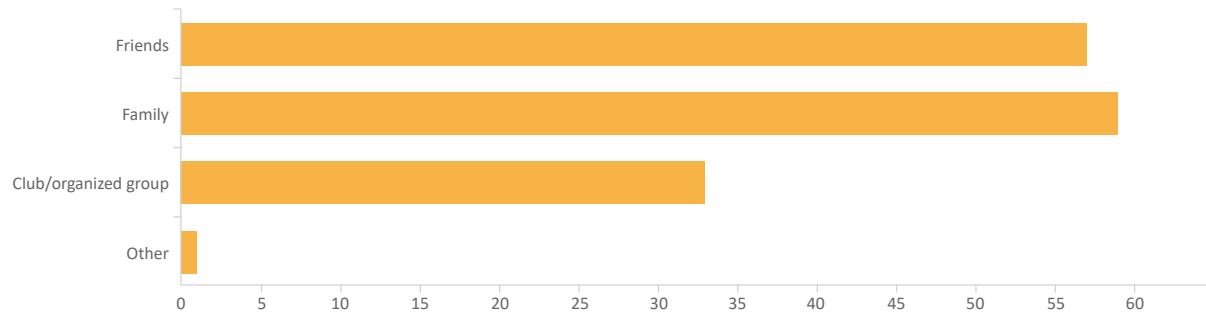
### Trail User Groups

Trail usage as a group activity tends to be fairly popular and group sizes vary. Most trail users surveyed hike in groups of around 2-3 people (45.7%). There are also a large number of people who use the trails in larger groups of 5-10 people (36%). Solo trail use (12.75%) and large groups of 10+ (5.32%) follow. These groups of hikers mainly consist of friends (37.75%) and family (39.74%) with some trail users choosing to go with a club or organized group (21.85%). Almost everyone agreed that Saskatchewan trail outings are a great activity for groups (90%)! 95% of people also agreed that trails are a great activity for families.

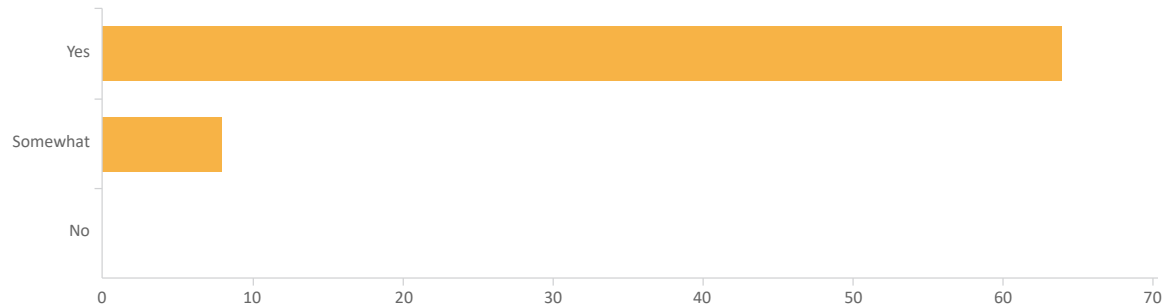
### How many people are commonly on your trail outings? Please select all that apply.



**What types of people commonly join you on your trail outing? Please select all that apply.**



**In your opinion, are trail outings a great activity for groups?**



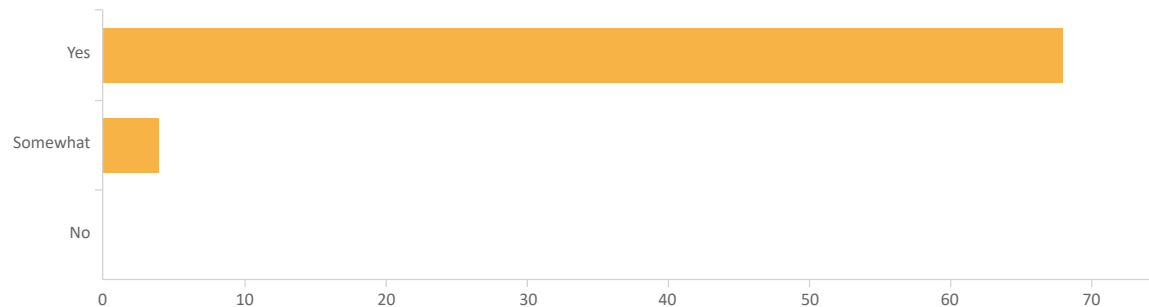
**The few who disagreed believed that it could be improved by:**

- Enforce drinking and riding laws better.
- The park could sponsor family biking days, where local bike shops take groups out for training rides.
- Suppose so, if they can find them and depending on the groups experience. As I have never participated in a group hike, no comment should be an option.

**Trail Experiences**

When respondents were asked about positive experiences on the trails, the comments included stories of families and friends on well-maintained trails creating great memories or participating in fun filled events.

**Are trail outings a great activity for families?**





## Some of these comments are:

- A group of about 15 of us went out once and cleared the trail to get to the spruce River we we had saws and axes and actually cleared trail so that we could get our canoes to the river.
- ATV usage in many areas are doing serious damage to trails used for snowmobiling in winter.
- After spending an hour finding the North Shore trail with the help of a city worker, it was a lovely walk which would have been even better if we had not had to hurry to make up the wasted time.
- All of them.
- Cookouts at warmup shelters.
- Dinners on the trails, visting with people you meet on the trails.
- Each fall there is a charity event at Buffalo Pound called The Power of 8 (Mito Canada). The event brings people together to enjoy a day on the trails in support of a worthy charity. The feeling of community and shared experience is very strong in this event.
- Everyday.
- Every time I go for a walk, snowshoe or snowmobile, I see something new and exciting whether it is a crocus blooming in the spring, wildlife or a tree of choke cherries that I can pick for jelly.
- Every time we ride the trails at Buffalo pound its a positive experience. Some of the most gratifying are after the parks people and/or trail user group volunteers have trimmed the trails.
- Everything about the trails is positive for me. Solitude, quiet, scenic.
- Great fun for all meeting new people making new friends.
- Great snow conditions, sunny and – 10 for our lopped this year.
- Have met many new people and have become friends with some.
- Hiking near La Ronge and listening to the loons on the lake. Soaking in the peace and beauty. Riding bike and waking the Meewasin and seeing people of all ages using the trail for all kinds of activity.
- I love all trails. Seeing nature etc. Just would like more.
- I've never had a bad experience, unless OHV users were involved.
- It can be so calm and peaceful and scenic!
- Just wildlife and views in general.
- Meeting other users and having a great chat about our backgrounds and interest in nature.
- Meewasin trail (Saskatoon) is beautiful and vibrant.
- Most of my experiences with ssa trails are great to excelent, I've bee to Ontario , there not that great.
- Our local trails, in northern Saskatchewan, offer ever changing environments in terms of vegetation, topography and scenery.
- People saying hi when you meet them on the trail.
- Portage trails in the north are usually pretty clean and very pleasant.
- Scenic views on trails in the Prince Albert Little Red River Park Trails, easy access to bathrooms and ice cream in/ on Red Deer trails in Waskesiu. Urban and off trail cycling paths along Meewasin Valley Trail in Saskatoon.

- Skiing the Duck Mountain Loppet. And any ski at Eb's Trails.
- So many positive experiences – most people are very courteous and many willing to chip in and help volunteer to help improve experiences
- The gem lakes trails were gorgeous
- The most recent one was discovering some trails that I had never been on during a long run. I got out into some new country off existing trails and found that a local mountain bike group are doing a fantastic job maintaining some quality trails and the bikers I encountered were super courteous. I kept stopping to let them go by me but every one of them pulled over and waved me by.
- They are all positive experiences, I love the bike trails and thoroughly enjoy every ride.
- Too many to tell!
- We always have a trail ride with a big group once a season to the eskers in Narrow hills provincial park. What a beautiful ride!
- Wildlife sightings, crocus finds, hearing songbirds, seeing pelicans...
- Many positive experiences, too many to count. From shelters to well marked trails, friendly people and helpful locals with advice.

**Unfortunately, there are also negative experiences. These problems were mainly due to lack of maintenance and signage, as well as ATV users or drunk drivers. Some of the comments were:**

- Garbage and dog poop.
- Meadow Lake park. So, interested in the Boreal trail and only able to go a short distance before it was impassable due to trees that had been blown down. Needs regular maintenance or it is worth nothing. People just walk or ATV in the forest around the blockage but that is ruining the environment. Government needs to spend money on park trails.
- Getting lost due to missing or poor marking of the trail.
- Drunk riders.
- ATVs destroying trails. Destroying property. Frightening horses. Leaving garbage, cans and bottles.
- No bathrooms at PANP trailheads. For example, the Spruce River Highlands Trail.
- Finding human waste products around. Dogs off-leash can be frightening when they come barking up at you.
- The south Meewasin extension turns into a road, making it less suitable for long distance family trips.
- Getting confused in the woods between Saskatoon and Prince Albert and wishing there were blazes to mark direction.
- Cyclists going too fast and not having bells to alert people .
- People who don't respect the environment.
- Trail users not respecting other users.
- Drugs being used in shelters.
- Lack of parks response to protect users by not managing the poisonous weeds such as — poison ivy, stinging nettles etc.

- No, but I can in Ontario.
- Any day on the trail is a good day.
- Bikers not yielding to horseback riders. Or not calling that they are coming up behind.
- Seeing garbage when riding on a bush trail on ATV.
- Went for a walk with daughter, her son, baby and niece. It was a hot day. We had our dogs with us. After walking for awhile we came to a map, as the kids were getting tired, we decided to take the short trail. Signage on trail was worn off and we ended up taking the longer trail. The kids were hot and tired, and we became concerned we were lost. I did feel I knew where we were so we on my own and go my vehicle to pick everyone up. On other walks I have ran into coyotes, I usually have bear stay and dogs with me.
- Watching ATV's go down your favourite trail.
- Rutted Trails by high ATV usage and bogs and streams destroyed by high powered ATVs with huge tires and idiots operating them.
- Getting lost x-country skiing on Pasqua Lake trails. Trail maps were of no help whatsoever.
- ATV or wheeled motorized vehicles accidents can happen so quickly when they are on the trail as they move a lot slower
- Sometimes we have to share the trails with logging equipment. This sometimes leaves the trails with not enough snow on them.
- I have got lost when trails were not marked.
- I run on snowmobile trails near Pasqua Lake and there are hidden mountain bike trails built by a cabin owner and his friends. The ATV's come in after heavy rains and the spring melt, totally chewing up the trails. When they find the mountain bike trails, they follow as far as they can, pushing over trees and making a mess as they take up a wider footprint then the bikes. They leave their beer cans and garbage to mark their travel and then other cabin owners haul their garbage and dump it at certain points on the trails.
- Two issues:
  1. Poison ivy and stinging nettle from June to September we are overcome by weeds, I am forced to wear long sleeves and long pants on hot days to protect my skin.
  2. Recently Sask Power was out to the park 2017 and 2018, they were replacing power poles, and they absolutely destroyed a couple of trails as well as some forest.
- Strava racing is one of the biggest negative experiences causing issues on trails today – people going to fast and then rude other trail users because they have ruined there attempt at a new personal best on a trail segment Also people altering trails to suit their needs without the proper approvals.
- poor signage on the Saw Whet, which I wrote to the Town of Lumsden about. No response, quite rude.
- Running into users on the trails that are new to the area is great, but I find that they consistently find posted maps less than helpful as they may be outdated or confusing.
- The gem lakes area was hard to find with poor signage.
- Yes, when OHV trail users are close to human powered trail users it's the mentality of the OHV users that they have right of way. The rip up the ground with their machines, litter and "BRAAAAAAAP" their throttles when they pass you. It's just ignorant behavior.



**Respondents were asked about their favorite trail and least favorite trail. There no comments on least favorite trail but many for favorite trail. These comments were:**

- Cypress Hills.
- Churchill river and further north (MacLellan lake area) on a canoe trip. Winter ski trail in PA Park and Elkridge is beautiful.
- Multi-use trails through Regina, they are close by for me and usable almost all year round.
- Eb's Trail system. Varied terrain, varied vegetation, well designed for positive Nordic ski experience.
- Route 66 Hudson Bay area.
- I love the trails at Danielson Park and the Sand Dune trail at Elbow. They are unique and beautiful and close to where I live. I also love many of the trails at Cypress Hills.
- Nut Point in La Ronge because of the rocky sections, closeness to the lake, and the gorgeous view from the turn-around camping area.
- Eb's Trails. It's close to where I live. It is wonderful both winter and summer.
- Meewasin – convenience, beauty, safety.
- Meewasin because I can use it to commute to work, or to run or to go for a walk along the River. I use it daily. I enjoy getting out of the city on other nature trails but this one feeds my soul daily.
- Meewasin because it's has everything.
- Meewasin – riverbank beauty!
- Poplar Bluff trails, lots of rolling hills and well sheltered.
- The trails in PA national park.
- The ones around where we live easy to use and well maintained.
- Boreal Trail-only backpacking trail.
- The Meewasin Trail – it is close to home and easy to get to.
- Hudson Bay Snowmobile trails. Beautiful scenery, nicely groomed, well taken care of trails and shelters.
- All the trails at Buffalo pound are a wonderful experience.
- Tc324a to Preecevill, on to Hudson Bay, to Swan River, and back to Canora.
- Tri valley snowmobile trails and the quad trail from Rocanville to Esterhazy on the old railway bed.
- Nipawin area. You can snowmobile to Hudson Bay from there and many other locations. Some open areas some forest a good combination of both
- TCT in Outlook especially when the bridge was open – able to enjoy great scenery combined with local history. Cypress Hills overall is great.
- Sections of the Trans Canada Trail and the adjacent Englishman River Trails.
- Our clubs snowmobile trails because I use them most often. I personally love my wilderness camping/canoe trips on the Churchill near Misinippe.

- Trails at Echo Lake. Love being out in nature and the variety of trails.
- The junction of Pheasant Creek and the Qu'Appelle Valley.
- Nisbet Forest near MacDowell.
- Snowmobile trails family and friends can join us.
- Esker run in Narrow hills provincial park.
- Cypress Hills – woods, vistas, varied terrain, etc.
- Wascana Lake trail.
- Nut Point. I worked in La Ronge for years and have run and hiked this trail many times. Great memories!
- Buffalo Pound, they have a great variety of challenging as well as easy trails ...something for everyone.
- All snowmobile trails in crown land (bush) are great. more needs to be done to make current ATV trails safe, signed and organized in a manor like the snowmobile trails.
- Nut Point in La Ronge is an amazing but very challenging trail – like it because it is very similar to riding in the mountains, very scenic and has a suitable end destination where one can camp over night. Other favorites are Corkscrew in city of Saskatoon and Weeping fee/Rutledge/Big Rock/Highroad/Barrels loop in Buffalo Pound.
- Anything I can ride on my horse.
- Jackpot at Buffalo Pound because it contains features that challenge intermediate and advanced riders regularly.
- I do not have one as I have limited access to trying many.



# Trail Operator Key Findings

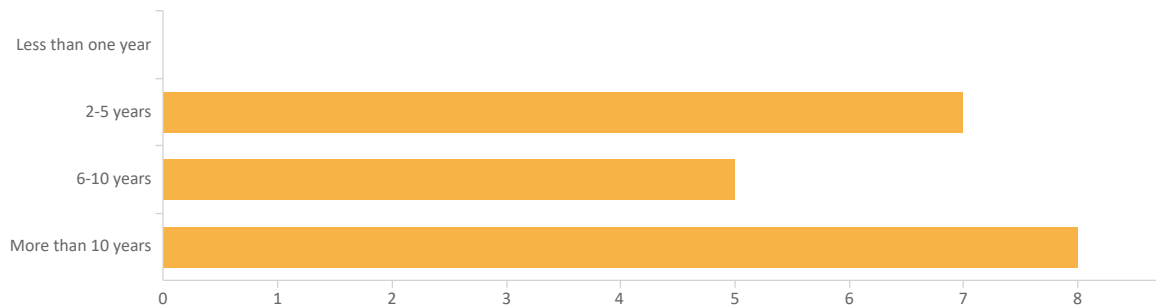
## Profile of Respondents

The trail operators that completed the survey were all very experienced and have been trail operators for many years. Most of the respondents had been trail operators for over 10 years (40%), followed by 6-10 years (25%), then 2-5 years (35%), and nobody for less than 2 years.

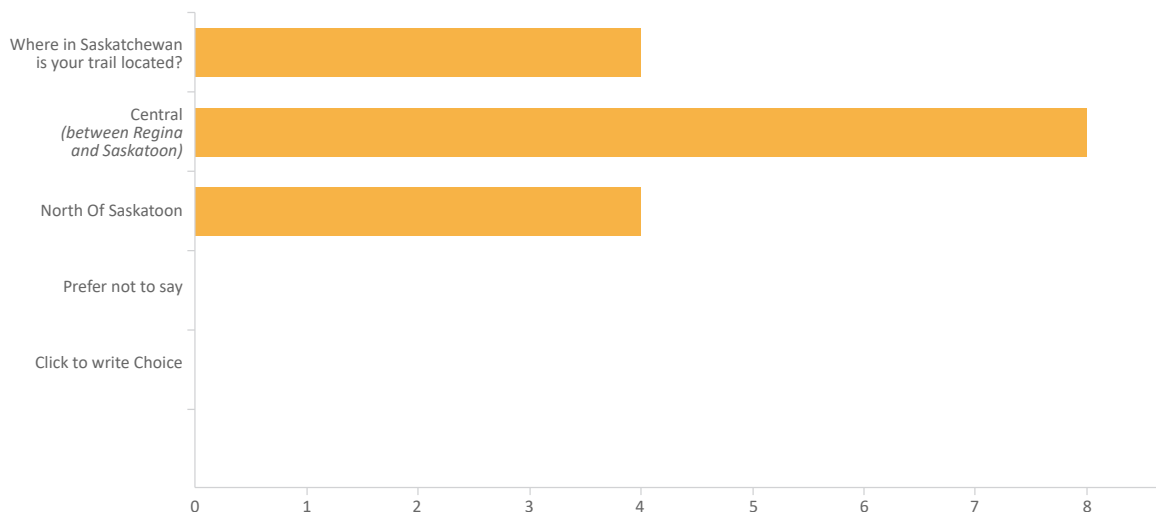
These trail operators have trails located throughout Saskatchewan with most being located between Regina and Saskatoon (50%) and 25% both north of Saskatoon and south of Regina. These trail operators have widespread trail users per year: 55% said that they have between 100-1000 users per year, 25% said between 100-5000 users per year, 10% said more than 5000 users per year. A few operators either didn't know or had less than 100 users.

These trails are used for all activities from running to cycling with a few trails having walking and snowmobiling being their main functions. Most trail operators (85%) had been involved to a certain extent in the building of their trail whereas only a few (15%) had not. Many operators (66%) found building these trails to be rather difficult while the others (33%) found it to be rather easy.

## How long you have been a trail operator?

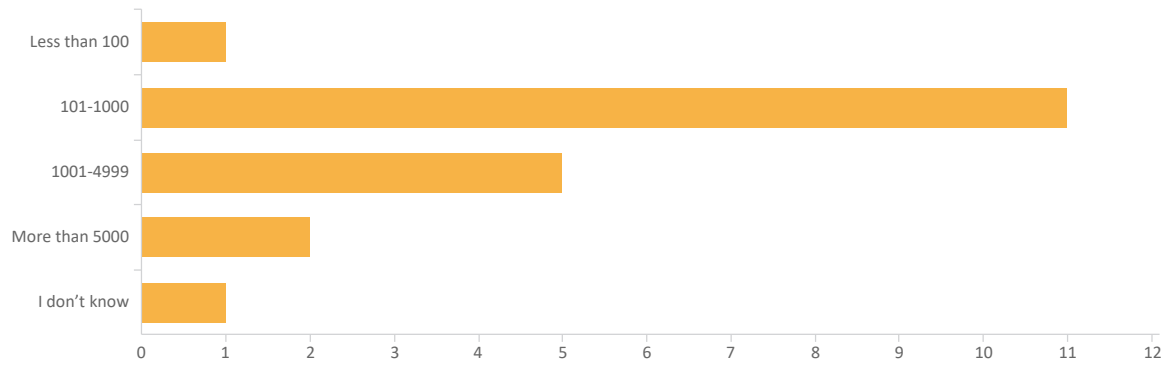


## Where in Saskatchewan is your trail located?

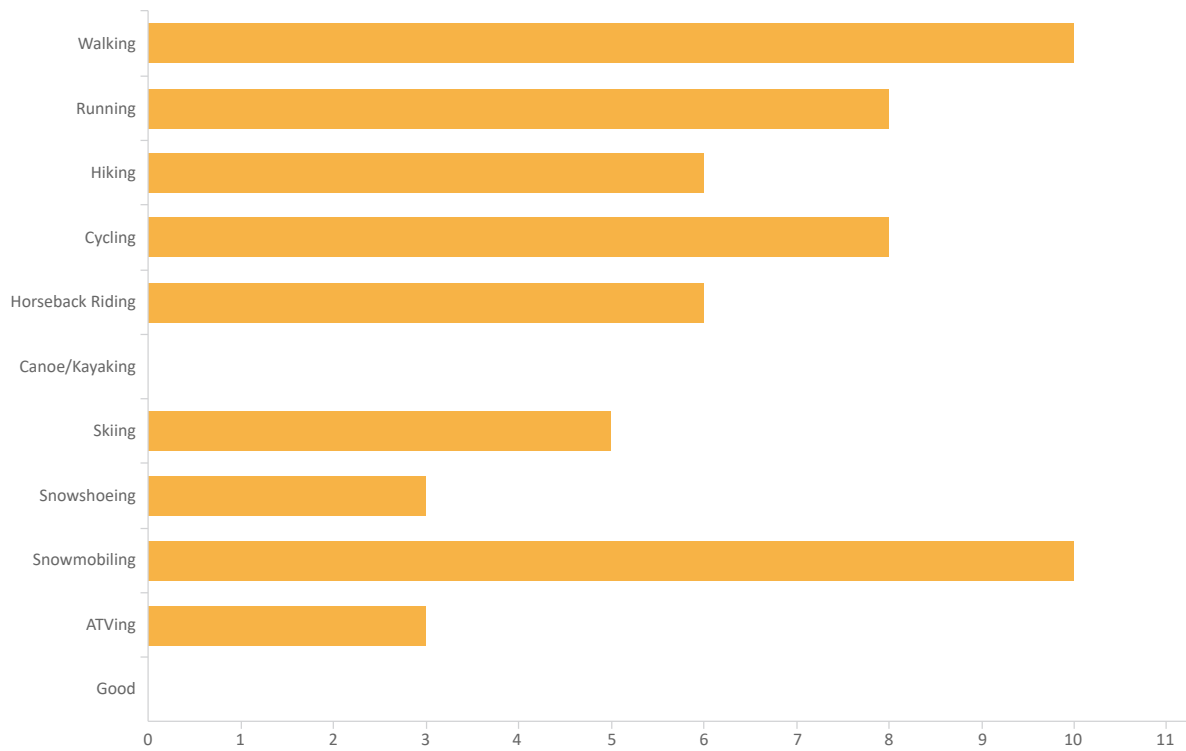




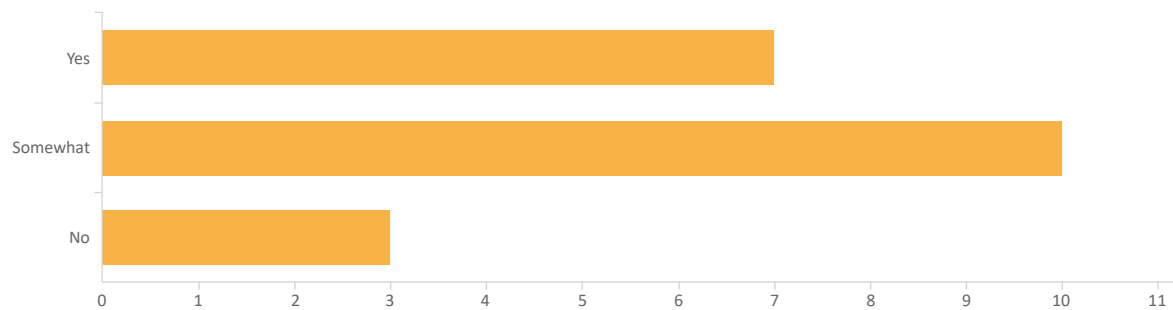
### Approximately how many people use your trail annually?



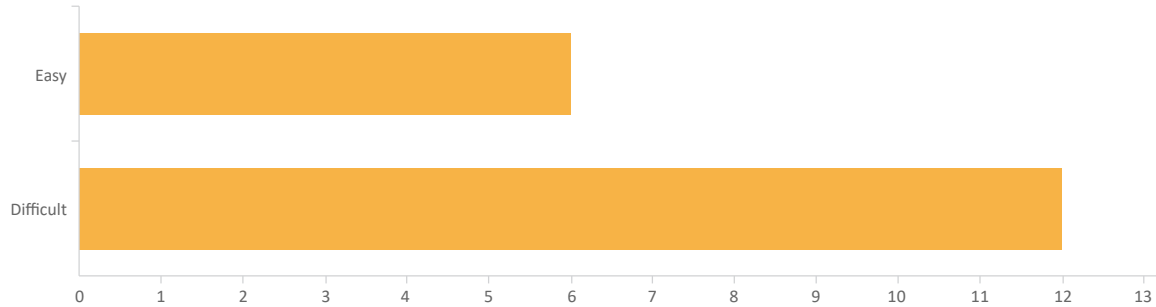
### What activities take place on your trail? Please select all that apply.



### Were you involved in the process of building the trail you operate?



## If yes, would you say it was an easy or difficult process?



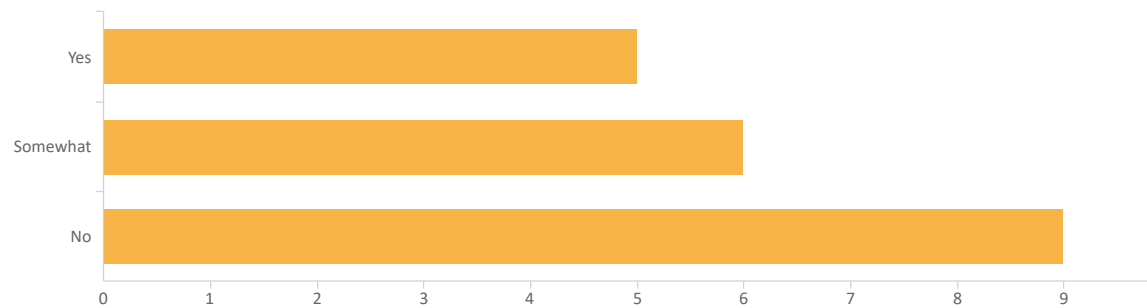
### Comments on the difficulties of building trails were:

- Lots of bush to clear out, some rocks to remove, planted grass after clearing was done.
- Permissions and building safe passages in environmentally sensitive areas.
- It took skill, knowledge and hard work, especially from others, but it was pleasurable.
- I've been involved in rerouting some difficult grooming areas the bushes heavy.
- I am a trail groomer.
- Had to use heavy equipment used volunteers and donated equipment.
- There is a significant amount of consultation involved and limited funding available.
- Need more money so we can pay people to maintain trail.
- Clearing brush, acquiring landowner permission, and trail reroutes require a lot of manpower that doesn't come easy in a smaller community.
- Lack of consistent grants makes this difficult. Also, there is limited access to pro trail builders. Currently working with IMBA Canada to get some volunteer training for building.
- Three people developed 50kms of trails, enough said.
- Initially we had to start our snowmobile club and get registered with the "SSA" Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association. Then it took several years of fundraising in order to purchase a Snowcap and build a drag for grooming. This was also in conjunction with working with landowners and the SSA to develop our initial 60 km long trail. Land use agreements needed to be signed by all the landowners, City, RM's and Dept of Highways. Once approved we had to purchase several thousand dollars in signage to make our trails compliant. Then comes the huge volunteer effort to install, maintain and remove all the signage at the beginning and end of each winter. We work very hard to respect the landowner's property and ensure their land has no sign of Snowmobile usage and no ruts were left from sign installation or removal. Under no circumstances do we go on their land when it is wet, and ruts could be made. This high level of respect for their land has resulted in great relationships with the landowners. Since our inception our trail system has grown to nearly 200 km.
- Cutting, clearing and maintaining a 12' wide ski trail through Canadian Shield geography.
- Snowmobiling in low environmental impact as all you have to do is wait for ground to thaw and groom trail and trim trees as needed.
- Loads of dense caragana to clean out to make the trail. Unable to select more than one option for trail use but also folks that are dog walking, hiking, running, snowshoeing and even a dogsledder on a couple for them.
- The process was easy however expensive.

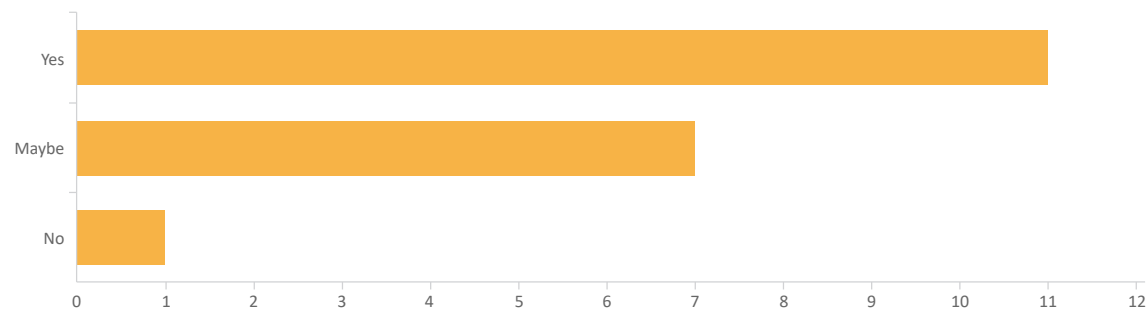
## Trail Building Experience

About 55% of trail operators had some sort of experience building trails before they had built the one in which they operate whereas 44% had no experience. Information and expertise seem easy to access and learn as the majority of trail operators (58%) feel they had sufficient information to guide the process and the others indicated maybe (37%) and a handful voted no (5%).

### Did you have any experience in trail building before this project began?



### As a trail builder, do you feel that you had enough information to guide the process?



### The information that was missing and the information that was most helpful was:

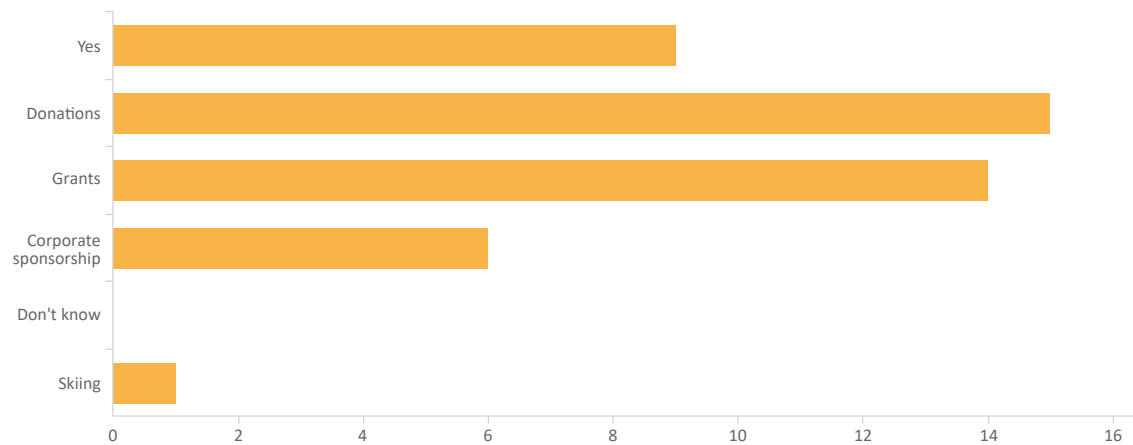
- I didn't have much info but was surrounded by experienced people working with me.
- Every situation is new – I think trail building is a constant learning process. As an example recently looking at a bumpy grassy section of trail and considering the most efficient (time and \$) to improve the trail – lots of options but not sure which is best – dig up trail and rebuild tread, fill in lower spots with new fill and compact, roll with heavy weight, Compact with a plate compactor...
- Maps.
- Most helpful was working with the experienced ones.
- One of the operators was very knowledgeable.
- Signage info.
- Joe Milligan, with parks, was an asset.
- SSA.

- The Sask Snowmobile Association is a wonderful organization that is nearly 100% responsible for the organization of our province wide trail system. The trail system is 95% funded by its users through annual trail passes that are collected for the SSA by SGI when you register your Snowmobile. This is a very well thought out and managed system to collect trail fees to ensure we can provide safe and legal trails for the Snowmobiling public.
- How to maintain trail direction in various types of geography. How to remove large rock formations.
- Mostly rely on IMBA resources and specialists for advice.

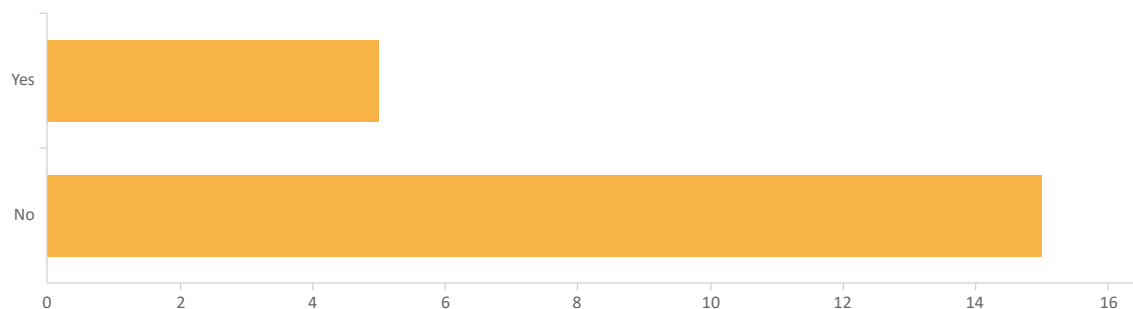
### Trail Funding

Trail funding is a topic that had very different answers. Funding for the trails can be difficult and come from many sources. The main portion of funding for trails was donations (33%), grants (31%), out-of-pocket (20%), and corporate sponsorship (13%). 75% of these trail operators believe that there is not adequate funding in Saskatchewan for trail builders, while the other 25% believe that there is.

#### How was the money raised for the construction of your trail? Please select all that apply.



#### Do you feel that there is adequate funding in Saskatchewan for trail builders?



## *Trail Benefits*

### **Trail operators had many different views on how their trail supports physical activity and provides social opportunities for groups of friends and families. Some of the replies are:**

- By encouraging people to use the trails, we rent our mountain bikes to use on the trails we keep motorized vehicles off of the trails to maintain them better.
- Snowmobiling has huge health bendy .org mental and physical With several recent surveys supporting Info on these surveys can be found on the Sask snow websites.
- All supported uses of the trails require substantial physical activity.
- Almost every kind of physical activity can be done on the on our trails.
- Snowmobiling and the physical labor to maintain it for the season.
- snowmobiling.
- Many different kinds of people use it summer and winter.
- It provides free, accessible trails for multiple users within an urban setting.
- Trail is open to walkers, runners.
- Connecting loop for Qu'Appelle valley / round lake area.
- The trails are multiuse trails within a Park. The trails support an active lifestyle and are for human powered use (no horseback or ATV).
- Ski trails.
- We host the Beaver Flat 50, an ultra marathon, that pushes people to their limits of physical activity.
- Snowmobile has been proven a physical activity on a scale 7.5 out of 10 by Ontario university.
- The trail gives all snowmobilers a safe and legal place to enjoy their sport. There is also a ton of physical activity required to install and remove over 6,000 signs and stakes at the beginning and end of each riding season.
- The trail was designed and is maintained to support physical activity. Your survey wouldn't allow me to add of the activities, but we ski, bike, hike, run and horseback ride on these trails.
- Support and funding for snowmobiles is great. This is needed for ATV and hiking trails.
- Yes, for sure – main intent of the trail.
- It encourages people to get outdoors and be active, having somewhere to go. Many people have limited access to personal space that is large and safe enough to enjoy in this manner.
- Snowmobile.
- Lots of berry picking can happen on the trails, we have picnic benches and sitting benches throughout the trails we have excellent signage to educate people about what they see on the trails as well as info about the history of the lake.
- It's a family activity with family friendly trail system and shelters.
- The operating club hosts frequent organized and partially organized group activities at the trails. There are two shelters at the trail heads to promote the social aspect.

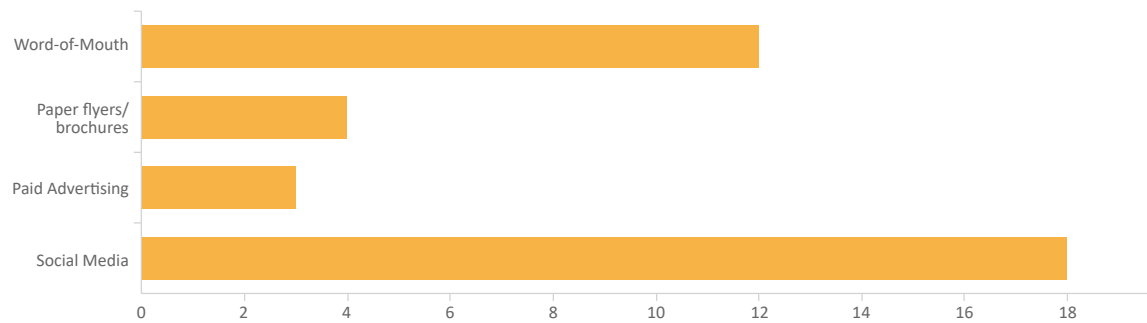


- The activities of our trails are family-orientated, and group orientated. Huts that people can socialize in.
- Provides a safe and scenic route for snowmobiling.
- By snowmobiling.
- Families and friends' snowmobile and ATV and will see friends walking or biking on the trail.
- Besides the trail itself, seating, picnic sites and cultural / recreational facilities are located adjacent to the trail. There are also many opportunities to access nearby retail, commercial and restaurants.
- Warm up shelters and many spots along the trail to stop and enjoy a visit and a hot dog.
- Connecting link to popular family shelter destinations and neighboring towns.
- getting out and enjoying nature with friends and family is such a great way to enjoy nature and build lasting relationships.
- Weekly family ski days.
- Hiking is a part of the camping experience.
- Yes.
- We promote snowmobiling in our community. We maintain 4 awesome warmup shelters on the trail system for riders and family's to warmup, enjoy a lunch, talk about their ride use our provided washrooms and enjoy our trail and facilities. Our entire trail system is 100% open to the snowmobiling public, and you don't have to be a club member to use and enjoy what we have provided.
- Groups of people bond through shared physical activity events and can also socialize before/after in the chalet.
- Many opportunities to meet new people in snowmobile warm up shelters. also provides a great link between communities.
- Yes.
- Any time families or friends can get together in opportunities that are unplugged bonding will happen. As people enjoy experiences together and make memories their relationships grow, their physical and mental well being strengthens.
- Snowmobile warm up shelters.

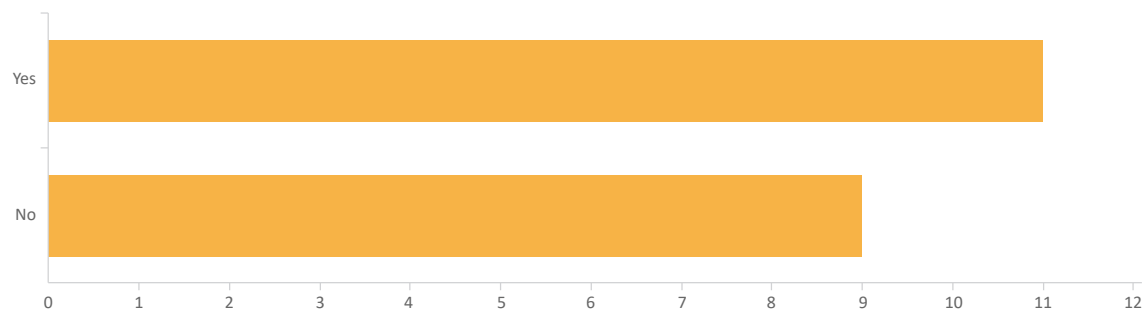
### ***Trail Promotion***

Marketing, advertising and promotion of trails can be very difficult. There are four main ways in which the trail operators noted that they get this completed. Social media was the leader (49%), word-of-mouth (32%) followed, and only a few operators promoted their trails through flyers (11%) or paid advertising (8%). The survey showed mixed results on if there are enough resources in Saskatchewan to help trail builders: 55% said yes and 45% said no.

## How do you promote your trail? Please select all that apply.



## Do you feel that there are enough resources in Saskatchewan to help trail operators promote their trails?



### Comments on this area included:

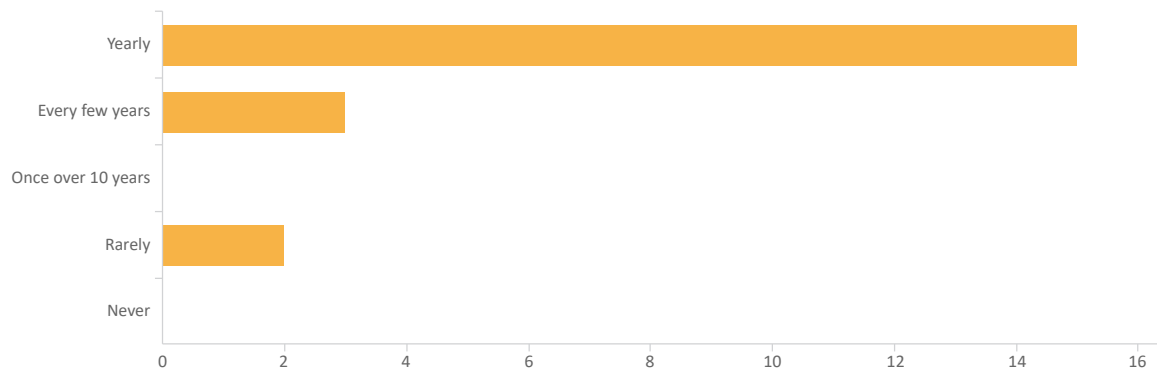
- If no, what are some additional resources you would like to see in place?
- Currently we are 30% user funded through permits the remainder 70 comes from donations and volunteers Being a motorized vehicle to have some funding come out of the fuel tax system would be a great benefit to our member clubs.
- More funding and opportunities for cross promotion.
- Need more money so we can pay people to maintain trails.
- More funding.
- More central info on developing and maintaining trails in all types of geographical conditions.

### Trail Maintenance

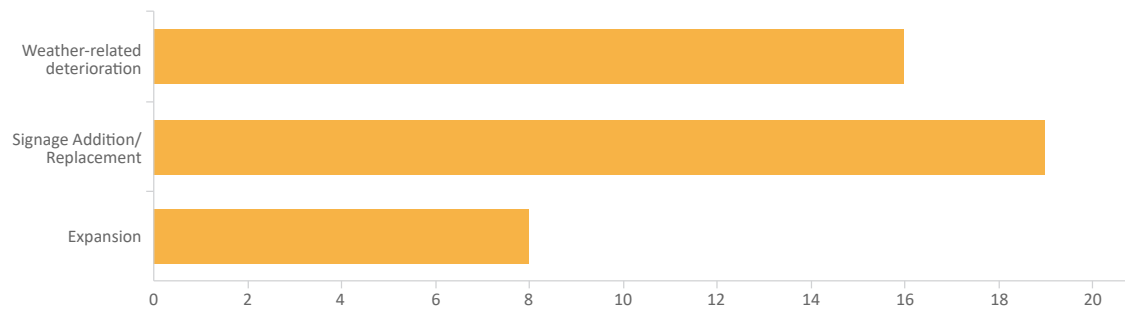
Maintenance is a constant battle for trail operators. Almost all operators (75%) said they make major repairs yearly, but some (15%) indicated every few years and a few (10%) also stated rarely. The reasoning for most repairs is a mix of weather deterioration (37%), signage addition/repair (44%), or expansion of the trail (19%). These expansions are funded for the same ways that new trails are built: donations (30%), grants (33%), out-of-pocket (20%), and sponsorship (17%).

Most (70%) trail operators believe that there is not adequate funding in Saskatchewan for trail repairs, maintenance and renovations, with the remaining 30% indicating that there is adequate funding. Most respondents also indicated that general maintenance is done on their trails weekly (50%) with other operators saying monthly (40%), or yearly (10%). These trails are chiefly maintained by volunteers (60%), paid staff (23%), and users (17%).

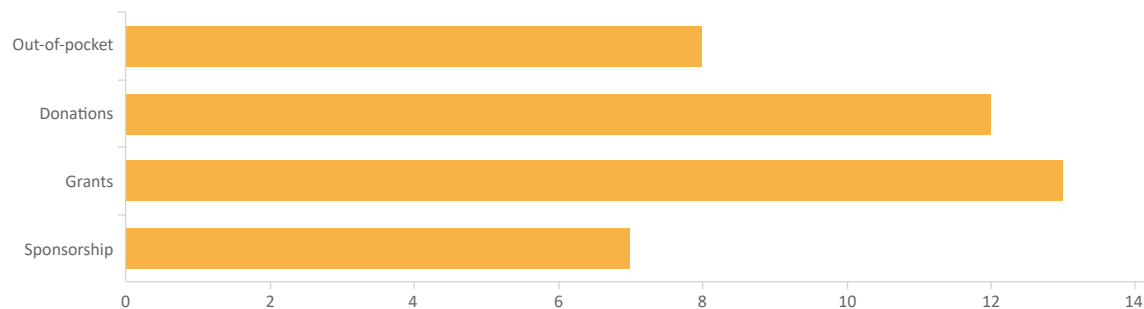
### How often do you make major repairs/renovations to your trail?



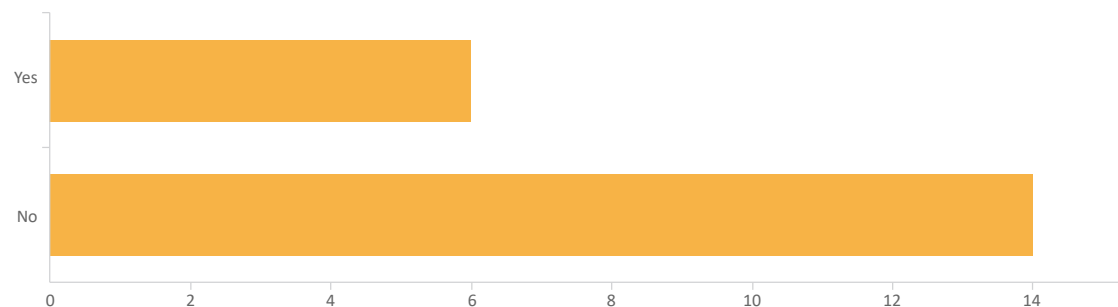
### If you make repairs/renovations to your trail, what are the reasons? Please select all that apply.



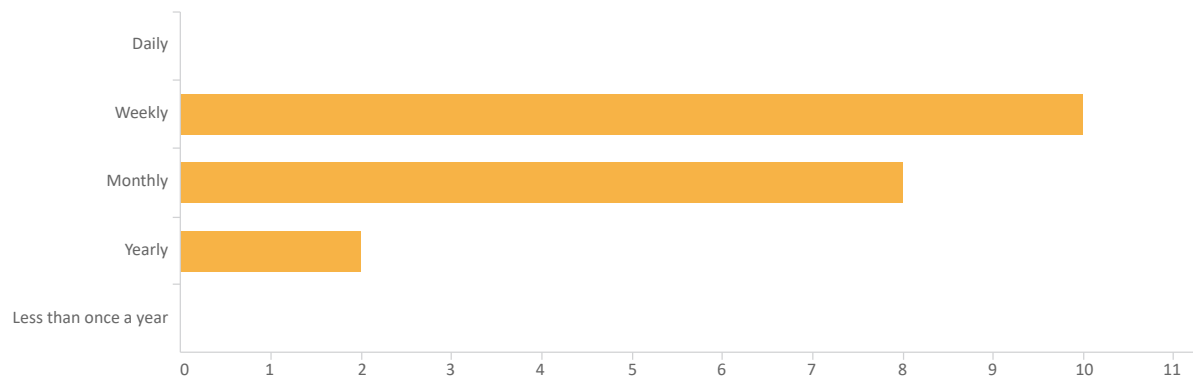
### How do you raise funds for your repairs/renovations? Please select all that apply.



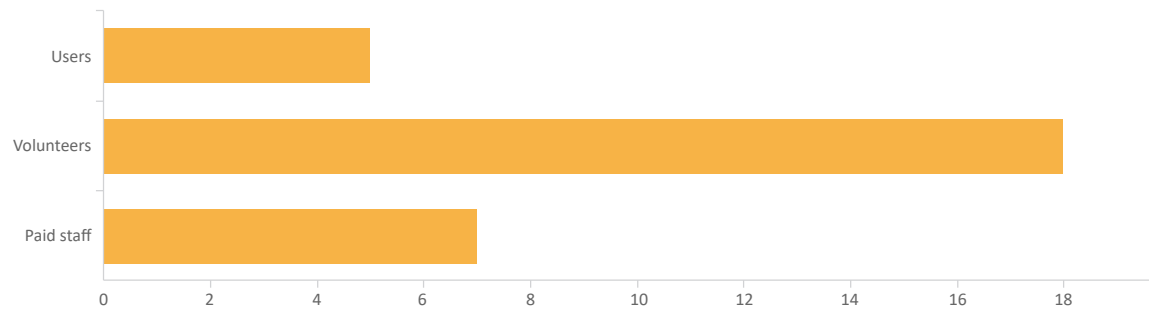
### Do you feel that there is adequate funding in Saskatchewan for trail repairs/renovations?



## On average, approximately how often do you perform general maintenance – such as garbage cleanup – on your trails?



## Who is responsible for your trail upkeep? Please select all that apply.



## Comments on the challenges of maintaining trails are:

- Deadfall blocks trails, fire is a hazard, equipment used to maintain is expensive and requires expert personnel.
- Getting enough not volunteers. Funds can sometimes be a problem.
- Misuse by ATV and other motorized vehicles other than snowmobiles
- Limited funding.
- We need paid staff.
- Low volunteer turnout/volunteer burnout.
- Lots of the trails are social built and were not constructed in a manner to reduce veg growth. So, lots of time is spent each summer simply cutting back grasses. Better trail construction would allow for time to do repairs.
- We are located in a provincial park, but the park is not responsible for the upkeep. So, we have to follow the rules of the park, but don't get any direct support on the trails.
- Weather damage and ATV damaging.
- Maintaining our volunteer base. Keeping quads and side by sides off the trails. They rut up the trails which make them unsafe for snowmobilers. They also have no insurance. I'm not sure what the answer is for the ATV community is due to the land damage they create by the riders that like to pound through the mud and destroy the land for any other use. The environmental impact left by the ATV's is not good. There also seems to be a mindset of the ATV rider that they don't have to pay to play. They will spend thousands on accessories to make a quad go through water and mud up past the handlebars, but they never collect user fees or try to repair their

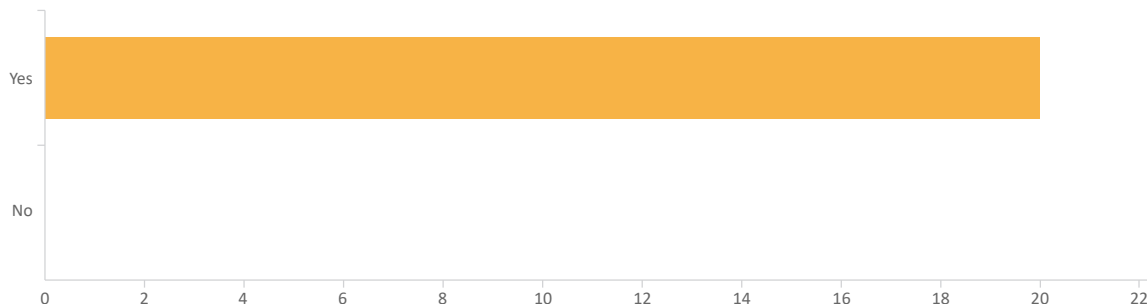
damage to the land. The ATV community needs to get better organized, find a way to register and ensure their machines and start building a trail fund like the Snowmobile association has done through collecting user fees. Land use for ATV's will continue to be a challenge due to the damage caused by a small % of riders that have the mud bog attitude.

- Getting enough volunteers that can put in enough hours to keep up with the maintenance work needed.
- Could only select one options for funding – should be donations and grants.
- Finances.

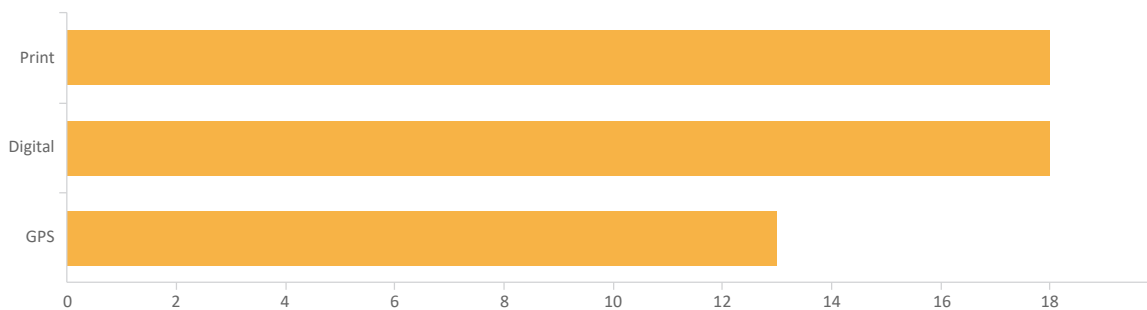
### Trail Maps and Signage

Every trail operator said that there is a map available of their trail. Almost all of the maps are available to print, view digitally, and are accessible on a GPS as well as online.

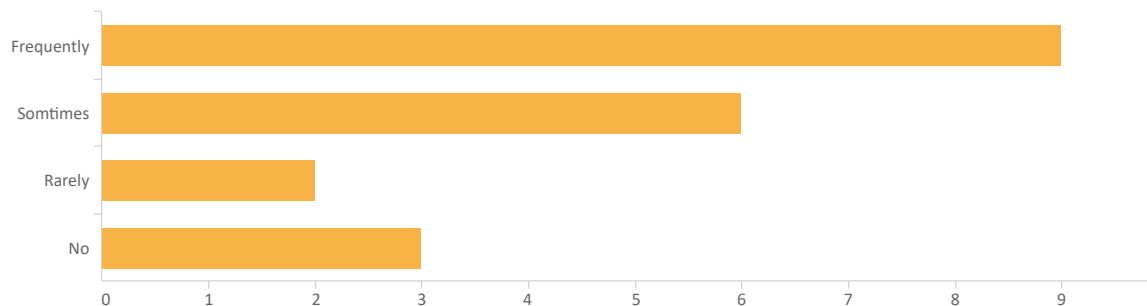
#### Is there a map of your trail available?



#### If yes, in what format do you offer it? Please select all that apply.



#### Do you ever consult with other trail operators on issues?





## **These trails have a variety of maps and signage available on site. Their comments included:**

- What types of signage do you have on your trail?
- every intersection has a weatherproof map and there is info signs all along the trails.
- Fixed permanently and season reflective signs all similar in nature to our Sask highway signs and regulations.
- Posts with distance and instructional decals, maps at all intersections.
- There is a map at each of the two parking lots there are maps with a you are here. At every Junction.
- SSA approved signs.
- Use SSA approved signage
- Trailhead / wayfinding; interpretive, regulatory.
- SSA approved signage on the snowmobile trail.
- SSA mandated signage.
- Signs and maps on trail.
- Metal laminate, wooden painted
- Colour-coded permanent trail markers (a durable plastic tubes fastened to a steel post).
- Snowmobile signs.
- Stop, stop ahead, slow, caution, curve, quiet in/quiet out, speed limits, stay on trail, farm yard ahead, two way traffic, destination, you are here maps, in the open fields there are trail markers that are painted orange complete with reflective tape on each side of the trail every 100 meters. In ditches along roads the markers are 200 meters apart.
- Trail name, direction and distance markers.
- Directional, safety and maps.
- Trails are listed on Trail forks app. Signage is according to IMBA standards with trails rated green, blue, black. Signs are 3.5x4in metal reflective plate mounted to 4x4 posts placed in the ground. Signs also contain distances, trail names and list of prohibited activities (motorized vehicles). Trail head signage is in 4 places where trail users enter the network and contain a map and list of user guidelines.
- Banners.

## **Trail operators were also asked about the steps they take to ensure people leave a small environmental impact. Their replies were:**

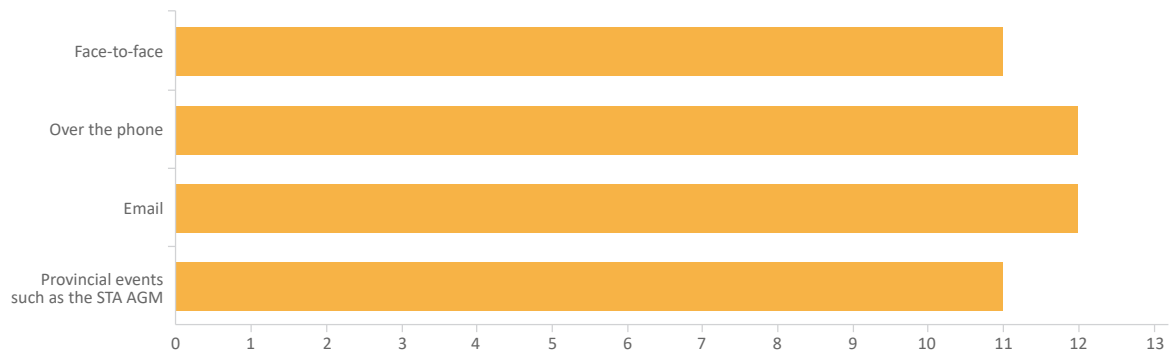
- Provide garbage bins, porta potty and dog poop bags.
- Signage has proven most effective and tv adds Working to developed trail systems showcasing sensitive areas while minimizing interaction more as to display from a safe viewpoint.
- People who use our trails do not generally leave garbage. Volunteers pick it up when they see it.
- We just hope that people respect the environment we don't have garbage bins and we don't have signage about waste.

- Signage garbage bins.
- Signage and social media.
- Garbage bins.
- Garbage cans at shelters.
- Garbage bins at warmup shelters, stay on trail signage.
- Garbage bin and signage.
- Garbage cans.
- Signs, garbage bins, etc.
- Clean constantly, provide signage, garbage cans recycle bins.
- We have signage, supply garbage bins and washrooms at all of our shelters and promote the bring it in and take it out attitude.
- Signage re dogs.
- Signs, garbage containers.
- Notes on the signage and spring and fall cleanups. Trails are used during the winter so a low footprint.
- Garbage, recycle and dog waste receptacles located along the route.

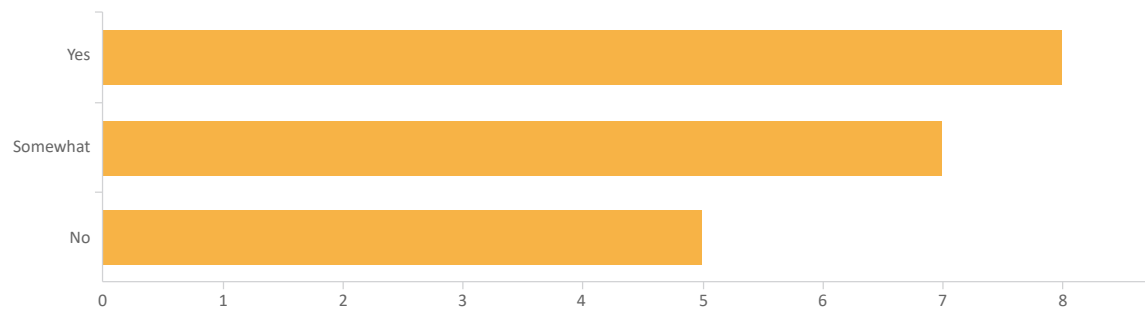
### *Professional Development & Networking*

An informal network of trail operators exists in the province and they seek advice and counsel from other operators through a variety of means including direct communications, phone, email and at the STA annual general meeting. Trail operators are interested in enhancing this network and have suggestions for professional development opportunities.

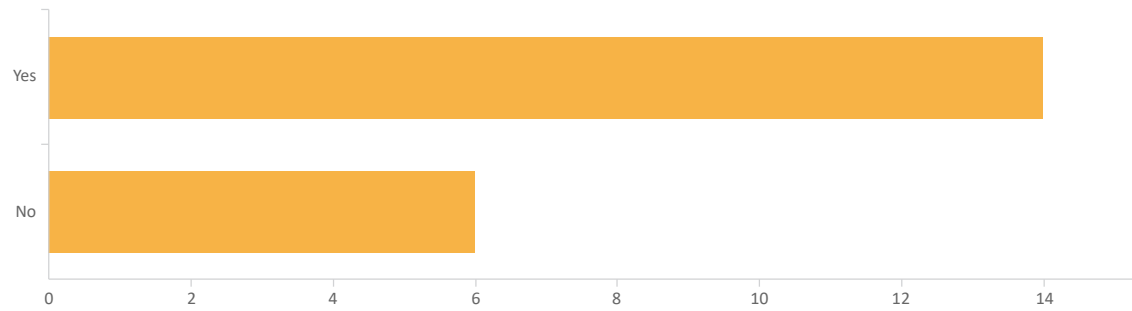
**If yes, in what setting do you meet with them? Please select all that apply.**



## Do you feel like Saskatchewan has a strong network of trail operators who you can ask for advice?



## Would you be interested in more networking and professional development opportunities with other trail operators?



### Suggestions for professional development opportunities include:

- I do think that the Saskatchewan Trail Association gives this opportunity. But I wouldn't say that I take the opportunity to use it as often as I should.
- Workshops, presentations, tours.
- We just need grants to upkeep our trails so we can hire people to maintain the trail system.
- Online, email, etc.
- Ski and recreational.
- Expansion of our trail system.
- Workshops and camps are a great way to connect and share ideas along with building skills. Ex. Attended a chainsaw training course organized by BORA trail group up in LaRonge – learned chainsaw training along with connecting and sharing ideas with other trail operators/stewards for a couple days.



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