

## 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?

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What would you do differently next time?

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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 a survey to see what proportion of people actually sign in. This will help judge actual use in the future.

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Will there be a next time?

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

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Did you have a good time?

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## Get the group together, and celebrate your success!!

(put a group photo of the Trail Committee right here)

See section 609  
Evaluation



# Trail Planning Workbook

Alberta TrailNet & Alberta Community Development

## Notes & Contacts

This manual will guide you through the first stage of planning a new trail. It is intended to be a working document, so use it to keep all your notes and ideas. Additional descriptions are included in the main manual to explain or give further information about a particular area. Show your progress by checking off each item as it is done .

**See section 104**  
**Approach to trail planning**

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

**Concept** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date started** \_\_\_\_\_

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### 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)

**See section 203**  
**Investigate the big picture**

**Why is this a good idea?**

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**Alberta TrailNet**  
**Toll Free 1-877-987-2457**

Find similar nearby trails, and get photos of them in use. Talk to their organizers. Contact Alberta TrailNet for local contacts.

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**See section 301**  
**Trail planning workshop**  
**Use your contact list**

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.

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Find out at the municipal office who owns or manages the land.

Name

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Legal description

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**See section 216**  
**Route evaluation checklist**

If possible, conduct a preliminary site evaluation. Watch for problems like water-crossings, bogs or cliffs. Take pictures, especially of the problem areas.

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**See section 205**  
**Environmental considerations**  
**See section 206**  
**Historic & cultural resources**

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 the government staff anyway.

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**See section 303**  
**Drawing people together**

Contact any outdoor clubs and talk to key people.  
(hiking, skiing, horse riding, snowmobile, fish & game, 4-H, naturalists)

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## Insurance

Determine the need for liability insurance and acquire a policy if required.

Insurance Agent Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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 colour the furniture was stained, and who supplied the equipment. Store the records in a safe place.

**See section 603  
Public safety**

**See section 509  
Final report**

**See section 605  
Programming**

**See section 610  
Maintenance**

### 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.

## 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 fund raising of some kind. Key points to address:

Item	Suggested frequency
Safety inspection	Each spring
Renew insurance	Annually
Litter & garbage	Weekly near towns, seasonally in rural
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.

**Go public!**

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

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**See section 306  
Publicity**

Get positive press coverage. Hold a public event on the site, walk the route if possible.

Media	Contact	Telephone	FAX
Newspaper			
Radio			
Television			
Cable television			

**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		

**See section 303  
Drawing people together**

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.(Forms for incorporating a group are available from your local license and registry agent)

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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.

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## Get endorsements

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

Target group or person	Requested	Received
MP		
MLA		
Mayor, Reeve, Council		
Major industry		

## 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.

**See section 107**  
**Preparing the**  
**project proposal**

## 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.

Design	Estimated cost
Land acquisition	
Clearing	
Labour ▪ 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:

**See section 309**  
**Fundraising**

- ✓ 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

**See section 423**  
**Development plan**

## 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.

Organization	Amount requested	Received
Environmental funds		
Trans Canada Trail		
Community donations		
Service clubs		
Suppliers (materials)		
Major industries		
Municipalities		
Provincial grants		
Federal programs (labour and/or construction)		

(Include the fair market value for all donations of labour, land or materials. This will be included both as an expense and a 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.

**See section 207**  
**Accessing private land**

**See section 208**  
**Accessing public land**

## 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

### 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 Wild Rose Trail System
- 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 a 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### 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. Keep this on computer to make it easy to add new information.
- start a scrapbook of all the promotion and support received

Consider hiring a consultant. As a rule of thumb, trails exceeding five km or \$50,000 will benefit from professional advice.

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See section 301  
Trail planning workshop

See section 203  
Investigate the big picture

See section 402  
Shared-use Trails

See section 409, 410, 411  
Surface types

See section 209  
Approaching landholders

See section 202  
Organizing your information

**Alberta Association of  
Landscape Architects  
(780) 435-7503**