



TRANS CANADA TRAIL
SENTIER TRANSCANADIEN
ONTARIO

*Best Practices for
Forming and Revitalizing*

Regional Trail Committees

In Ontario

*Prepared by: Kirsten Spence
Querewood Consulting*



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

This report provides a “Best Practises” model for trail groups to become viable operating Regional Trail Committees in the province, regardless of their organizational structure. The development of Regional Trail Committees in Ontario is regarded as the most likely mechanism to aid in the construction of recreational trails and the Trans Canada Trail for its target completion date of 2010. With the possibility of the Olympic Torch travelling across Canada on the Trans Canada Trail for Vancouver 2010 provides the impetus and focus for completing the trail.

1.2 Alignment with the Ontario Trails Strategy

The Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion has become the lead ministry for trails. With the launch of the Ontario Trails Strategy, funding has been provided to various trail groups and organizations to develop many key pieces of the Trails Strategy. This strategy supports the best practices for Regional Trail Committees and includes other projects such as the Trillium Trail Network, mapping, and the creation of a trail’s data base.

The Ontario Trails Strategy has a number of goals and strategies to help create a sustainable system of trails in the Province. The goal to “adopt and implement new coordinating mechanisms to improve trail stakeholders’ ability to work together” is the one target this report addresses. Groups need support to “develop “a framework for collaboration among trail coordinating bodies at the regional and local levels” and Regional Trail Committees will best address this need. (Ontario Trails Strategy, 2005).

The recent investment by Ministry of Health Promotion towards Go For Green’s Active Transportation Workshops throughout Ontario has moved the concept of Active Transportation to the forefront of people’s minds and political agendas. This shift in awareness has already filtered down to local streetscape planning and trail development as awareness within the Ontario Government about Active Transportation increases. Active Transportation encourages Canadians to choose active modes of transportation like walking and cycling that contribute to a cleaner environment, improved personal health, and places higher priority on non-motorized methods of transportation.

Trans Canada Trail Ontario will be working with other groups like the Ontario Trails Council, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs to ensure that all projects under Ministry of Health Promotion funding are integrated to provide a complete strategy that will be successful.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Trans Canada Trail

The concept of the Trans Canada Trail was conceived by the Canada 125 Corporation in 1992 as a legacy project. This organization was set up to celebrate Canada's 125th year in Confederation. The now defunct Canada 125 Corporation provided seed funding (\$580,000) to help establish the Trans Canada Trail Foundation in December of 1992. The Trans Canada Trail logo is, in fact, a modified version of the Canada 125 logo. Prior to its public launch in June of 1994, the Foundation spent one year establishing itself with grass-root trail and user-related organizations throughout Canada; their support was and continues to be the underpinning of the entire movement (Trans Canada Trail Foundation, 2006). The construction of the Trans Canada Trail is completed through local groups who plan, design, build and maintain the trail within their own communities.

Trail development hit a plateau after Relay 2000 since many Canadians believe the trail was completed for that event. With the possibility of having the Olympic Torch run across this country on the Trans Canada Trail, there is a resurgence in trail development. Currently 55% of the Trans Canada Trail is open for business and the push to complete the remaining 45% is underway. Presently, 80% of Canadians live within 40 kilometres of the Trans Canada Trail. The investment to complete the trail in Ontario alone would be money well spent as the economic spin-offs of the completed trail illustrate that the cost to complete the trail could be recouped in four years of expenditures. Many Ontarians can attribute their jobs to the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario from recurrent expenditures (Price, Waterhouse Coopers, 2004).

The Trans Canada Trail Foundation does not own or build any trail. With the majority of trail development occurring at grass roots levels by local trail groups, the Ontario sections are owned by local and regional municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Ontario Parks, Ontario Realty Corporation and Ministry of Natural Resources through administering Crown Land (Andrews, 2006). The groups that own or operate trail are supported provincially and nationally through Trans Canada Trail Foundation. The support through Trans Canada Trail Foundation provincially has a different structure in each province but the support in Ontario comes through Trans Canada Trail Ontario.

The Trans Canada Trail is “the most ambitious volunteer-based trail building endeavour in Canadian history. It will wind its way through every province and territory, spanning 18,000 kilometres and linking over 800 communities. When completed in 2010, it will be the longest recreational trail in the world” (Trans Canada Trail, 2006).

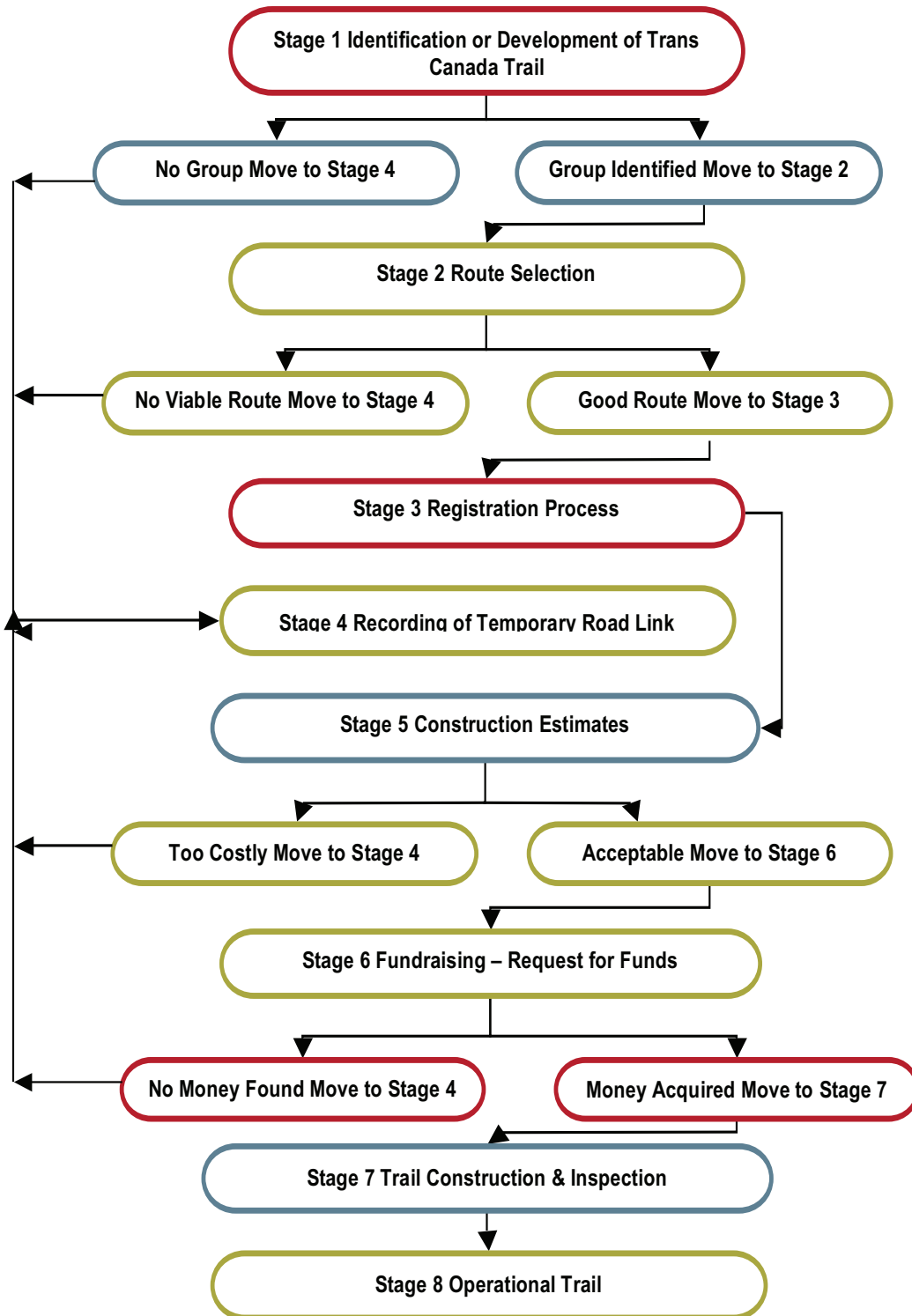
The Ontario Picture

Ontario is a unique situation since it has the largest section of the Trans Canada Trail in the country with the most challenging topography. In addition, it has vast unpopulated areas in the north which can't sustain viable trail development organizations. These challenges are not unknown to the Foundation in Montreal. To help local groups succeed in developing Trans Canada Trail in Ontario, Trans Canada Trail Ontario was formed. Trans Canada Trail Ontario is a separate provincial entity with its own board of directors. Support to Trans Canada Trail Ontario from Trans Canada Trail Foundation varies depending on its immediate needs. That support has included the salaries of staff as well as travel and office. Trans Canada Trail Ontario has one full-time staff position, the General Manager and has the ability to hire consultants on specific projects. The General Manager provides support to emerging and existing trail organizations to identify, register, develop and maintain the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario. A large part of this position is troubleshooting for the smaller groups around issues such as organizational concerns, insurance, facilitating funding applications for development, and lobbying provincially and nationally on issues such as risk management and policy issues.

Trail groups vary throughout the province, from organized to unorganized, large to small. This mixture has created a challenge for connecting and completing the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario. The gap between the provincial organization of Trans Canada Trail Ontario and the local trail groups created a need for a regional body to represent local issues to the provincial body. This would create a network in which information, funding, marketing and support could be better delivered between Trans Canada Trail Ontario and the local groups; thus, the concept of the Regional Trail Committee was developed. Although this concept would greatly advance the completion of the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario, other trail organizations like the Ontario Trails Council would also benefit with the creation of Regional Trail Committees for the development of the Trillium Trail Network.

The lack of a "system-based approach" has been identified as one of the major barriers for building trails in Canada. The Trail Development Continuum was created by Trans Canada Trail Foundation to provide some guidance for trail organizations to work through a step-by-step process for trail development. This "Trail Continuum" is a great tool as it sets out the broad base steps required for successful trail development regardless of location. Some have called for a "standardized systems approach" in Canada which hasn't occurred yet for a variety of reasons. This standardized approach would work on a per-province basis where policy development would create broader approaches for the system so standards and good management criteria are applied (Irvine & Associates, 1999). The role of the Regional Trail Committee will aid the relationships between local and provincial trail organizations as well as create a provincially standardized approach.

Trail Development Continuum



(Trans Canada Trail Foundation, 2006)

3.0

MODELS

3.1 Role of the Regional Trail Committee

The role of the Regional Trail Committee will vary from region to region but will act as the “intermediate” group between local and provincial level trail groups. This intermediate level aids in provincial coordination of trail systems like the Trans Canada Trail and the Trillium Trail Network. This occurs as Regional Trail Committees act as the support network for the development, management and promotion of these provincial trail structures at the local level. As most trail development occurs at the grass roots level, support at the local level translates into support at the provincial level.

The Regional Trail Committees Purposes are:

- To be representative of trail interests over a set geographic area
- To manage a diverse set of issues in line with community interests at the regional level
- Communicate successes and issues to the public, partners, local government and funders
- Network with other Regional Trail Committees and equivalents,
- Identify and assist in resolution and advocacy of operational trail issues locally, regionally, provincially and nationally.

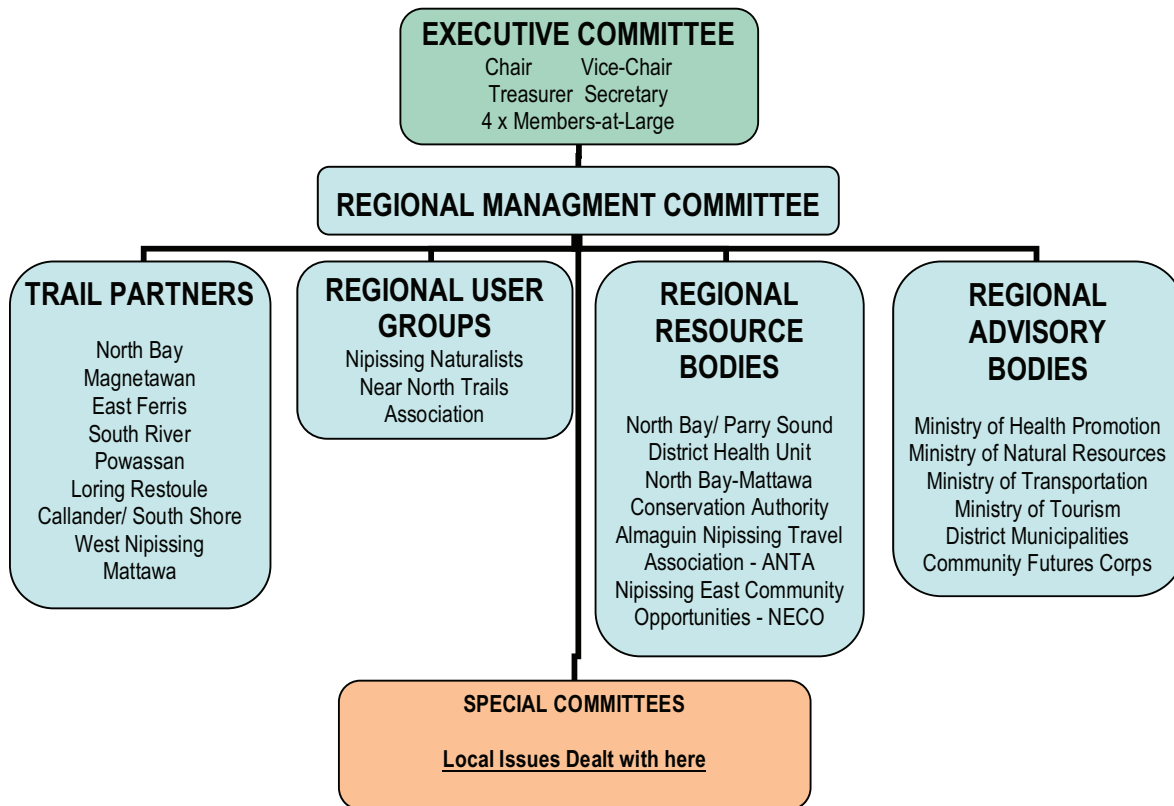
(Andrews, 2006, Connor & Andrews, 2004)

Regional Trail Committees play a role in trail development in other countries. The State of Victoria in Australia has a strong Rail Trail movement which is being led by the State Government. This program recognizes the vital role of community involvement in the planning, design and development aspects of trail advancement. In literature promoted by the State of Victoria, they cite that “Local Committees of Management, or similar bodies incorporated especially for the purpose, will be established to develop and manage each Rail Trail. The Committee of Management will take into account: the needs of adjoining landowners, conservation values, the interests of local councils and community groups and trail users” (Rail Trails Victoria, 1994).

3.2 Regional Trail Committee Composition

The composition of the Regional Trail Committee in your area will be different than your neighbouring group as you accommodate diverse interests across a specific geographic area. The major advantage of a Regional Trail Committee is local groups through an effective Regional Trail Committee can organize a certain way to ensure all voices are represented (Connor & Andrews, 2004). Regional Trail Committee composition is not formulated overnight, but is an evolutionary process. Issues faced today by the group will change overtime. Ensure that your mandate reflects this and is adaptable without having to rewrite when new issues arise. The following chart shows the ideal structure of a Regional Trail Committee (North Bay region). This representation is generic enough to be an example for your Regional Trail Committee format.

Regional Trail Committee Composition – For Consideration



(Connor & Andrews, 2004)

There is much debate in the Trails Community on the merits of the Recreation vs. Tourism models. This shouldn't be an "either or" situation. A blend of these two models would strike a balance for serving the local residents and attracting visitors. Trails to the local community are more recreational based while trails to visitors are more tourism based. Tourism models tend to be more commercially driven and can attract "visitors" and still serve the needs of the local people. Tourism models are a way to fund the maintenance and coordination of trails while recreation models need to be subsidized by either local or provincial governments. Some trail organizations in the States have a local resident fee to use the trail which is at a much lower price from the visitor's fee. This instils the notion that trails are not free, are a privilege not a right, and a valuable resource of the community. With the emerging Trillium Trail Business Plan through the Ontario Trails Council, hopefully some of these issues can be address as well as provide sustainability to the Trails Community.

3.3 Regional Trail Committee Model Reference Guide

Life Cycle	Case Study #	Group	Model	Staff	Builds Trail	Manages Trail	Maintains Trail	Incorporated	Contact
New	7.2.1	Oxford Trails Council	Volunteer			X	X		Lorna Boratto, Chair lboratto@county.oxford.on.ca
New	7.2.2	Chatham-Kent Trails Council	Volunteer			X	X		Rick Gray, Chair RGRAY@ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca
Intermediate	7.2.3	Huronian Trails & Greenways	Charitable, Volunteer			X		X	www.simcoetrails.net
Intermediate	7.2.4	Thunder Bay Trails	Charitable, Volunteer			X	X	X	www.tbaytrails.net
Intermediate	7.2.5	Park-To-Park Trail Association	Not-For-Profit	X	X	X	X	X	www.parktoparktrail.com
Intermediate	7.2.6	Discovery Routes Trail Association	Not-For-Profit		X	X	X	X	www.discoveryroutes.ca
Mature	7.2.7	Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance	Not-For-Profit	X	X	X	X	X	www.thetrail.ca
Mature	7.2.8	Grand River Conservation Authority	Conservation Authority, Not-For-Profit	X	X	X	X	X	www.grandriver.ca
Mature	7.2.9	Rainbow Routes Association	Committee of Council	X	X	X		X	www.rainbowroutes.com

3.4 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis of Different Management Models

Model	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Volunteer Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong volunteerism can move the platform forward - Represents the desire of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often under resourced (funding) - Burn out of volunteers or lack of volunteerism - Tend to lack professional staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not tied to a political agenda, more community oriented - Often can get meeting space, event booths etc free due to volunteer banner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unstable organizational structure, can change with volunteer membership & involvement
Not-For-Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stand alone group serving the community - Strong volunteerism can move the platform forward - Can attract funding & donations - Special tax status & tax rebates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need start up costs - Dependent on donations/grants - Often under resourced (funding) - Funding dictates short/long term goals - Volunteer burn-out or lack of volunteerism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can court corporate funders - Can be more focused on trail development/operations than other types of organizations - Can offer professional services to other groups & municipalities 	<p>See Weaknesses</p>
Charitable Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stand alone group serving the community - Strong volunteerism can move the platform forward - Can attract funding that other groups aren't eligible for - Can attract donations & issue tax receipts - Special tax status & tax rebates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependent on donations/grants - Often under resourced (funding) - Other community projects may take precedent - Need start up costs - Funding dictates short/long term goals - Volunteer burn-out or lack of volunteerism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can court corporate funders - Can be more focused on trail development/management than other types of organizations - Can offer professional services to other groups & municipalities 	<p>See Weaknesses</p>
Non-Government Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offers services outside of the municipal structure - More focused mandate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reliant on user fees, donations, government funding which may change anytime - Pays taxes on services & infrastructure to municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can act as an REGIONAL TRAIL COMMITTEES if the area is large enough & there are enough groups to participate - Can offer professional trail services to other groups & municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trails aren't often the core business but an additional service offered that may be subject to policy changes
Committee of Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal resource support (staff, engineers, legal etc) - Municipal budget - Municipality can compensate committee members - Access to funding others aren't eligible for - Municipality can issue tax receipts - Under municipal insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject to council agendas - Strength depends on political will, may change with councils - Change in council every 4 years - Volunteers burn-out - Lack of volunteerism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good way to form & launch once plans are in place - Change of Council - Resource access (tax bill inserts, cheaper advertising through account, more public awareness by being part of municipality) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council may not see trail development/management a priority - Change in Council every 4 years

3.5

Other Information to Consider

There are few Regional Trail Committee examples of found in trail literature. The few examples that do exist mainly are from the United States where great strides in trail development have occurred in the very popular “Rails to Trails” movement. In a 1991 survey of US State Trails Committees, the number one reason (39.3%) for Regional Trail Committees development was to deal with legislation by government initiatives. Many smaller trail groups band together out of necessity to deal with issues like legislation, resource sharing and joint marketing (Nichols, 1991). Other groups are formed when a group of people want to develop trails in their area; others are formed by the local Health Unit or when a rail corridor is abandoned.

Regional Trail Committee representation is an important consideration when organizing and structuring the group. The membership may change due to different initiatives and issues which will give your group more flexibility. In the 1991 United States Trail Survey, commonly shared characteristics identified Regional Trail Committees having at least 6.2 different trail users on their boards and 25% of the committees have representation from a single user group, either snowmobiling or bicycling. In total, 14 user groups were identified that participate on trail committees; they are shown in the following table by representation (Nichols, 1991).

Membership Representation by User Group

Equestrians	60.7%	Hikers	57.1%	Mountain Bikers	57.1%
Snowmobiler's	57.1%	Backpackers	53.6%	Pedestrians	50.1%
Tour Bikers	50.1%	ATVers	50.1%	Wheelchairs	35.7%
Motorcyclists	35.7%	4WDers	35.7%	Cross Country Skiers	32.1%
Boaters	25.0%	Dog Sledders	21.4%		(Nichols, 1991)

With an average of at least six different user groups on a committee, there are differences between motorized and non-motorized composition. Committees with only non-motorized or motorized users are tied at 29.6% but committees with both motorized and non-motorized representation jumps to 40.7% (Nichols, 1991). According to Ryan and Winterich, the mandatory step in trail development success is to build a broad based constituency within the trail committee. They state that groups should look for support in the local area but also think regionally and state/provincially (Ryan & Winterich, 1992).

Boundaries need to be self-determined by the Regional Trail Committees as the group knows best which areas and smaller trail organizations could be served under the umbrella Regional Trail Committees. Some ideas over past years have boundaries following the tourism boundaries in Ontario. This would number twelve which is too few for the province of Ontario. Under this system, five Regional Trail Committees were registered with Trans Canada Trail a number of years ago (Rainbow Routes, Discovery Routes, Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance, Huronia Trails and Greenways and Huntsville Parks and Trails Committee). The Huntsville group is a local organization and are now participating in the new Regional Trail Committee, the Muskoka Trails Council.

Currently, there are 24 Regional Trail Committees identified in Ontario but with 59 gap areas where there is no Trans Canada Trail, it is evident that the existing Regional Trail Committees are too few. Many larger municipalities that encompass larger geographical areas are logical Regional Trail Committees. The challenges continue in Northern Ontario where there are

large areas of unpopulated, unorganized tracts of Crown Land under provincial jurisdiction. Currently, there are 16 “urban gap” areas where Trans Canada Trail isn’t a priority, or development is moving slowly. There are 24 “rural gap” areas where Trans Canada Trail has funded projects where Regional Trail Committees exist but trail development hasn’t been finished yet. There are 19 identified “remote gaps” where there are substantial distances and no multiple users coordinating organization (Andrews, 2006).

There are many benefits of trail development and more are being documented as the sector becomes more sophisticated. Trail development is a fairly recent phenomenon with most managed trails being built in the last 30 years. This is one reason why there is so little documented regarding process. Other reasons include a fractured community (everyone working on a local level), no sustainability within the organizations, and limited provincial coordination.

Incorporation

The Ontario government has a “Not-For-Profit Handbook” for groups wishing to incorporate as a Not-For-Profit organization. This is a great resource for groups who are considering becoming a charity. The handbook can be downloaded from the Attorney General of Ontario’s website at www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/nfpinc/generalinfo.asp. There are advantages of incorporation as the Handbook states “the corporation is a separate legal entity distinct from its members and has the capacity to own property, to sue and be sued, it affords limited liability protection to its members. This means that individual members are not personally liable in certain instances, for the corporation’s debts and obligations. The corporation is not affected by changes in its members, be it due to death or any other reason. Therefore, it is easier to enter into a number of transactions in the name of the corporation such as, banking, owning real estate or signing a lease or contract. A majority of the members of the corporation have the power to bind the others by their acts”. As there are advantages, there are also disadvantages of incorporation. Again stated in the Handbook “the corporation is a creature of statute, it is subject to some supervision by the Government of Ontario and it must conduct its affairs in accordance with the applicable statutes. For example, the constitution or by-laws of the corporation, the election of directors and the calling of meetings of members are all governed by the Corporations Act. In addition, a corporation is required to report certain information on a regular basis to certain departments of the Government. Failure to comply with reporting or disclosure requirements could render the corporation and its directors and officers liable to certain penalties, the ultimate penalty being the cancellation of the charter and dissolution of the corporation” (Attorney General of Ontario, 2006).

3.6

Case Studies

The case studies found in Appendix 8.2.1 explore different models of real Ontario Trail organizations. Five different structures were identified but some groups are a hybrid cross of two or a few models. The model you choose needs to fit your own community’s particular needs and situation. By identifying what is required before choosing a model rather than imposing an existing model on a community is the best first steps.

For this report, the groups who were chosen as Case Studies are by no means favoured over any other trail organization. They were chosen for their structure and history to share with other groups as they represent the typical cross section of trail groups in Ontario. The purpose of the case studies is to show how and why groups are formed, how they are funding and the lessons they have learned along the way.

4.0

DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL TRAIL COMMITTEE IN MUSKOKA



Muskoka Trails Council

The Muskoka Trails Council is an emerging Regional Trail Committee in Muskoka. This group was supported by Trans Canada Trail Ontario staff during the drafting of this report to guide them through the process. This group's progress has been documented over the past year to show potential regional groups the steps taken by this group to become organized.

History

The first steps to form a regional group in Muskoka unfolded about five years ago by the Park-To-Park Trail Association. At that time, the Ontario Trails Council was discussing Regional Trail Committees at the board level as a solution to better communicate with the local trail groups. Park-To-Park Trail Association's President Steve Alcock was an Ontario Trails Council board member and felt that Muskoka-Parry Sound was ready for such an initiative. Park-To-Park Trail Association felt that some of their management issues could best be addressed at a regional level rather than a local level. Park-To-Park Trail Association met with FedNor and District Council staff to layout a plan and funding to undertake this initiative. There were a few meetings held with all the partners, but the group never took off as there was no regional group emerging to lead the charge and it was outside of the current mandate of the Park-To-Park Trail Association. The idea was shelved until spearheaded again by members of the Huntsville Parks and Trails Committee. Trans Canada Trail then endorsed Huntsville as one of the five Regional Trail Committees in Ontario. The thought at the time was to create a partnership with other local trail groups around Huntsville to form a Regional Trail Committee. Since this didn't happen for a variety of reasons and Huntsville joined Muskoka when that group emerged (Andrews, 2006). Since then, the group has evolved into its current membership which consists of trail groups, District Councillors, the Health Unit and other trail supporters under the banner of the Muskoka Trails Council. This group is in the early stages of development but they have a strong will to move trails to the forefront in Muskoka and they are starting to put together the basic building blocks to get them there.

Political Boundaries - Background

The District of Muskoka has two-tiered government. There are the local councils of Huntsville, Bracebridge and Gravenhurst overlaid by the Muskoka District Council. Trail development that has already occurred in Muskoka can be attributed to local council's desire for the Trans Canada Trail in their communities. The District tier hasn't fully embraced trails. They view trails as a lesser priority and should stay at a local level. The Trans Canada Trail has been registered in all

three communities in Muskoka although the trail's completion varies from community to community. There are some gap areas with issues that require provincial solutions. The local groups haven't been able to solve these issues yet and a Regional Trail Committees to advocate on their behalf would be helpful (Challis, 2006, Muskoka Trails Council, 2006).

Parry Sound District is less organized than Muskoka in respect to trails. The sporadic trail development is mainly due to the large rural nature of Parry Sound. Municipalities found in the Parry Sound District have smaller, unconnected trails that serve the local population although many are undertaking trails as part of their tourism/economic development plans. Much of the trail development has been spearheaded by the Park-To-Park Trail Association and Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. The Park-To-Park Trail Association is the largest multi-use trail managing group in the area and it actually covers three Districts (Muskoka, Parry Sound and Haliburton). Park-To-Park Trail Association manages 230kms of trail for many users and municipalities. Some trail development was undertaken by the Town of Parry Sound and Parry Sound Rotary Club with the Rotary Algonquin Fitness Trail. This trail winds its way along the waterfront of Parry Sound Harbour and is part of the Park-To-Park Trail system. Parry Sound District has 70kms of Trans Canada Trail within its boundaries administrated by Park-To-Park Trail and is largely comprised of the historic Nipissing Road and the Seguin Recreational Trail. There is a road link into Huntsville where it meets up with the Huntsville Parks and Trails Committee's portion of the Trans Canada Trail.

There are two tourism boundaries in this area, one for Muskoka and another for Parry Sound. These two tourism organizations do work closely together to promote the two districts, even sharing a website to promote the area.

As many Regional Trail Committees are supported by Health Units, the recent reorganization of the local Health Units is a bit cumbersome. The Muskoka-Parry Sound Health Unit has been split up with Muskoka joining Simcoe and Parry Sound joining the Nipissing Health Unit.

Another boundary to consider is Muskoka and Parry Sound being one political riding, both federally and provincially. Health Minister Tony Clement's home riding is Muskoka-Parry Sound.

Recommendation - The potential boundaries of this Regional Trail Committee are complex with many factors to consider. It is Trans Canada Trail Ontario's recommendation that the group proceed with the boundaries of the Muskoka District and consider at a later time the inclusion of the Parry Sound District into the mix. The main reason for this recommendation is this issue is currently preventing the group from moving forward to become more organized. There is an opportunity for Parry Sound's based Park-To-Park Trail and the Parry Sound Snowmobile District to join in a regional capacity which would probably be a large enough geographical area to stand alone as a Regional Trail Committee. Discussions are in the preliminary phase at this point.

Progress Points

- After meeting and discussing issues over the past year, the Muskoka Trails Council wasn't moving forward with any concrete plans. This was becoming an issue and many stakeholders were starting to question the purpose of the Muskoka Trails Council. A push from one of the committee members to organize brought the mindset of the group around to "lets stop talking about this and start making some concrete plans". Stemming from this, the group felt that they needed to create the founding documents of the organization. The first steps the group took were to create vision, mission and mandate statements. There was some differences of

opinions within the group which needed to be addressed early on. Many of these issues could be settled through this exercise of determining their mandate. The group was undecided on the geographical area which they would represent; whether to include Parry Sound District into the fold or not. There were many factors they needed to be considered. The process was delayed as this volunteer group has received funding through Go for Green to undertake the Active Transportation Workshop which they began planning.

- Muskoka Trails historically used the website www.muskokatrails.com to promote their trails. This website was owned by the local newspaper and updated by their editor. When the newspaper was sold to the Osprey Media Group, the website transferred ownership to Osprey as well. The Trails Council is still receiving good support from the past editor who hadn't retired yet but feared losing this resource and the web domain if and when circumstances change.

- The Muskoka Trails Council has now developed a draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 7.3). The group has determined to focus on just Muskoka but left the door open for the inclusion of Parry Sound at a later date. This decision has already moved the group forward with their Terms of Reference and the goals and the conditions of membership. They will be promoting their purpose at the Active Transportation Workshop to attract new members and promote their organization.

- The Muskoka Trails Council has decided that staff is the next goal in their development. They have been sourcing funding to hire an intern for a year to move the organization forward and have determined that FedNor funding would be the most suitable. They are eligible since they are in Northern Ontario Federally (but not Provincial). Muskoka Trails Council is looking for donated office space and feel they could raise the 10% salary required as well as some additional dollars for project costs. They are considering requesting either the District of Muskoka or Muskoka Tourism to host the FedNor Intern application until they become incorporated. The group has also approached their Ontario regional consultant for applying for a Summer Experience student who would work with the Active Transportation Committee.

- The Muskoka-Simcoe Health Unit applied for funding through Active 2010, Heart Health and Health Promotion and was approved. The Muskoka Trails Council was identified as the best delivery organization for the funding and host the Active Transportation Workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to create awareness with the public and local government to consider using active modes of transportation like walking and cycling that contribute to a cleaner environment, improved personal health, and places higher priority on non-motorized methods of transportation. The group felt that by hosting the workshop, their profile would increase through the local press coverage and fulfill their mandate of promoting healthy, active and safe lifestyles and contribute to building sustainable rural and urban communities throughout the district Municipality of Muskoka. They also plan to update their promotional trail guide and erect standardized signage along trails in the District. They have put signs up along trails in Gravenhurst and have just ordered more standard theme signage for other trails in the network. The group is also updating their "hip-clip" trail guide to include more trails that are in the network as well as the completed Trans Canada Trail in Muskoka (Tyson, 2006).

- The Muskoka Trails Council has decided to apply for Charitable Status and Incorporation with Revenue Canada. They felt this was the way to apply for funding on behalf of other groups that they would facilitate to other volunteer trail groups and themselves. Muskoka Trails Council felt that this would be the best way to serve the District as a Regional Trail Committee. The group does have a little bit of seed money from a previous local trail group which was transferred to the Muskoka Trails Council.

- The Muskoka Trails Council held an Active Transportation Workshop with Go for Green attended by the community and many municipal staff, planners and engineers. The session attracted roughly 55 attendees. The outcomes from the workshop were very positive especially around supporting the Muskoka Trails Council. This was a jump start for Muskoka Trails Council as the interest was sparked and there were many attendees willing to volunteer in some capacity to see Active Transportation and trails improved in Muskoka. A list of Strategic Points was proposed by each working group and will be prioritized into a work/action plan for the organization and future staff. The points were goals that could be completed in a six month timeframe but many more were long term. These identified needs are good targets for the Trail Council to consider and determine where it fits into their vision.
- At their meeting following the workshop, the Muskoka Trails Council debriefed the Active Transportation Workshop which all members were generally satisfied with the results and turnout that day. The group determined that Active Transportation will be part of the mandate of the group. They will set up an Active Transportation sub group of the MTC which will be comprised of volunteers. They felt this would keep the momentum generated at the workshop going. This volunteer driven group would be tasked with choosing a few “Hot Spots” that will be high exposure, low budget requirement and addresses Active Transportation. A few suggestions included bike racks on the Main Streets of Huntsville, Bracebridge and Gravenhurst where it has been identified in their budget, signage which will be paid for by Heart Health and a series of newspaper articles to create awareness. The Committee broke out the Strategic Points from the Active Transportation Workshop so a work plan could be created for a FedNor Intern and a Summer Experience Student. Each point was assigned to the Muskoka Trails Council, the Intern or Student and their priority. The points were discussed at the next meeting and then the work plan would be drafted and the application forms filled out. The hope is to have an Intern in place for Spring 2007.
- The group decided to ask two existing groups to “host” their grant applications until the Muskoka Trails Council receives approval for Incorporation. The groups that will be asked are the Muskoka Heritage Foundation and Muskoka Tourism. It felt that with the municipal elections in November, if the District of Muskoka was approached, then the issue would take too long to be approved. It would be next spring before this issue would even be considered. A recently retired lawyer who the group is going to approach to sit on their council and help with the application for incorporation and charitable status. The group also discussed having a delegation go to the District’s Planning Department in January to do a presentation on Active Transportation.
- Muskoka Trails Council also drafted a few questions to circulate at All Candidates Meetings for the upcoming Municipal Elections. These were sent out to the Muskoka Trails Council’s email list so the public can ask on behalf of MTC around Active Transportation and Trail issues.
- The Muskoka Trails Council called for members to sit on their subcommittee for Active Transportation issues in Muskoka. This meeting was well attended and the group now has a functioning Active Transportation subcommittee who will be responsible for implementing projects that aid in creating more opportunities for alternative forms of transportation. The group has targeted bike racks in Bracebridge and Huntsville and operating a pilot project for paved shoulders on a District road.
- The Muskoka Trails Council sent a letter requesting approval for the Trans Canada Trail under Highway 11 in Huntsville. This request has been denied in the past by the Ministry of

Transportation as the route requires the trail to run parallel to the highway for a short distance before crossing underneath the bridge over the Vernon Narrows. This required approval has been an obstacle for the completion of the Trans Canada Trail in Huntsville. This evolution of advocacy is encouraging as the Muskoka Trails Council is now operating as a Regional Trails Committee.

CONCLUSIONS

The Muskoka Trails Council is typical of an emerging Regional Trail Committee in Ontario. It has made great strides forward in the past year to become more professional, laying the ground work for obtaining staff and outreach to the community. As most organizations do, the Muskoka Trails Council will move forward exponentially once they have staff in place. If funding is approved for an intern and a summer student, the Muskoka Trails Council should be able to move towards fulfilling their mandate of being that “central voice for trails and related issues in the District of Muskoka”. This group is a perfect example of what other groups should expect once they lay the initial ground work and begin the process of operating as a Regional Trail Committee.

5.0 RESOURCES

5.1 Best Practises Template for Regional Trail Committee Development

Steps	Measurable	Notes
Opportunity	Idea	Community desire, recommendation, need etc.
Consultation	Consensus	Start by gathering supporters for the project, pitch to council, other partners etc.
	Mandate	Regional Trail Committees serve local trail groups, who are you representing?
	Meetings	Information meetings to build volunteer board
Organization	Group Formed	Decide what type of organization you want to be (Structure, goals, etc).
	Terms of Reference	Need to determine the parameters of your group, helps attract new members, funding, credibility, needs to be a clear message
	Geographical Area	Define boundaries of your group, ensure no one else is already working in those areas, you don't want to compete with another group (trail development is enough of a challenge already)
	Apply for status	Could be not-for-profit, committee of council, charitable, volunteer (see SWOT on different models 3.4)
	Business Plan	Need to set out some directions, budget, goals (See outline in Appendices). Some funding organizations want to have a business plan submitted with application.
Fundraising	Funding to reach goals	Need some seed money to start, want staff etc.
	Fundraising Plan	Direction for campaign, targets, project budget
	Grant Writing	Need one person to research what is available, clear plan of what you are asking for; does it fit into your mandate?
Community Support	Memberships/Donations	Builds over the life of the project, need to keep the campaign fresh, best success is to hire a fundraiser/community programmer to manage this portion of the organization
	Endorsement	Speak with council, business development centres, build support from leaders as well as the community
Professionalism	Policies & Staff	Keep policy development and review on each agenda to keep the group progressing
Sustainability	Long term operations	Need to consider sustainability early on in the life of the organization so steps can be taken to move in that direction, many wait till crisis point then expect miracles of staff

The Best Practices template found on the previous page is meant to provide guidance to emerging trail groups. This is a road map through development and addresses issues that your group will have to face at some point in your existence. Groups may experience them in a different order depending on the circumstances of their growth. These are steps that the Case Study groups have or will experience in their development.

5.2 Organizational Success Tips

One of the main tips for success of your Regional Trail Committee is planning and consensus building. After you form your group, plan a few meetings to layout your vision, mission and mandate statements. This will allow the group to collectively determine the goals and direction of your organization. If there are members of your group that don't like the direction or can't see how they fit into the structure, this will give them a chance to step away from the group. Remember that board turnover is not necessarily a bad thing. It is the normal evolution of an organization. Board members come and go for different reasons and the organization should have a strategy in place to deal with the board member recruitment (see Human Resources Policy for more information). Once you have this basic organizational foundation laid, it is easier to move onto the next steps.

The Institute for Conservation Leadership is an organization dedicated to strengthening leaders, organizations, and coalitions or networks that protect and conserve the Earth. Based in the United States, the Institute uses the tools of consulting, training, coaching, meeting facilitation and research to help groups more effectively accomplish their missions (Institute for Conservation Leadership, 2007). The Institute for Conservation Leadership conducted a study around Regional Organizational Health in 2004. This survey was voluntary but the results are indicative of what this report's research has typically found within the Trails Community. Their survey compared Ontario's board based environmental and conservation community to others in the American southern states. Interestingly enough, mostly independent staffed Not-For-Profit organizations responded. Ontario had more small staffed organizations that had a higher percentage of new Executive Directors or lead staff (one to three years experience) than the survey average (42% vs. 32%). This falls to 23% vs. 32% for staff working for an organization three to six years but rises again for staff with six plus years experience with the same organization (30% vs. 32%). One of the concerns that most trail groups have raised when interviewed for the case studies was the short-term funding available for staffing through either grants or internships. Groups are finding that by the time their staff are up to speed, trained and making a real difference with moving the organization forward, the funding is finished and staff move on as no continuation funding can be secured. The organization is back to square one again hiring and training new staff for the one year cycle; the continuity is lost. Another explanation for the short-terms that staffs serve is burn-out. Working for groups with limited budgets, resources and support often leads to staff moving on as they find the constant struggle draining. This scenario has been well documented in the Not-for-profit world as well as experienced the Ontario Trails Community. Ontario groups tend to have smaller budgets than other survey respondents. The average Ontario budget was \$270,000 with the survey average being around \$340,000. This is quite a difference as the outstanding \$70,000 could hire more staff to help relieve current staff workloads.

All volunteer groups raise most of their budget through memberships (35% of their budget) and donations (22% of their budgets) with the balance raised through grants, events, earned income or national office allocations. Groups with staff have a different mix of funding sources. Staffed organizations of small, medium and large sizes raised 50%+ of their budgets

through grants. These groups have the staff resources to write these grants as well as have a greater chance of being incorporated which opens more avenues of funding usually unavailable to volunteer groups. Membership revenues for these staffed groups fell to less than 20% of their annual budget. The largest groups (with 15+ staff) raise their budget revenues mainly through fee for services.

Staffing was another component that was explored in this survey. The Institute found that groups that had 15+ staff had a much higher chance of success as they have the resources to keep the organization operating the way that is required to be successful. The size of the organization (number of staff) directly relates to the amount of funding they receive as income is distributed strongly towards larger groups. The bottom 62% of organizations receives 4% of the total income while the top 8% receives 76% of the total income (Institute of Conservation Leadership, 2004).

Certain organizational development practises were identified that correlate with greater growth and success. These practises were identified for volunteer group's show that organizations with larger boards that met more often and undertook Strategic Planning had become more effective with governance, financial management and planning and monitoring of programs. Organizational practises for staffed organizations are different than their volunteer counterparts. Staffed groups of all sizes who hired a development director increased their organizational staff by an average of 34%. Professional Development was another component that was identified as a key success factor. Groups with a professional development component in their budgets saw greater effectiveness in achieving program goals, fundraising, human resources, financial management, strategic planning, communications, marketing and governance. Groups that offered professional development opportunities also reported an increased retention of staff. Many groups have had set backs, or failed, for many reasons, but the one commonality is a lack of support for administration and staff. Trail development in Peterborough is a perfect example how great intentions peter out after groups fail to gain that initial step of staff and a minimal budget to open the doors (Marsh, 2006).

The mobilization of volunteers was another benefit from staff professional development training. When more volunteers were involved with an organization it was witnessed that an increase in effective fundraising and achievement of program goals occurred. This is one of the reasons why many groups track their volunteer hours. This is a good practise as it allows groups to track accurately their benefit to the community. Hours can be used for in-kind funding on many grant applications. Hours are usually assessed at \$12-\$14/hour to help "quantify" the impact. Make sure your group has a standard blurb that is included in all press releases, grants, public notices of how much funding (including volunteer \$'s) that your group has put out in the community. It may seem insignificant now but it will add up. Other benefits that groups experienced when they tracked volunteer hours included survey constituents, increased volunteerism, board diversity, sounding board for policy directions, enough computers for staff and collaboration for policy directions. Many of these benefits are experienced by groups who have sound developmental practises and may not necessarily reflect volunteer tracking alone.

Capacity building is directly related to the professionalism of an organization. Organizations that undertake many of the developmental practises mentioned above have a greater success rate with capacity building as they are usually more sustainable, have experienced staff and board, and have the policies and strategic plans in place to move forward with capacity development. According to the Institute for Conservation Leadership survey,

there were common attributes that groups felt would help them build capacity and sustainability. The top ten were: major donor programs, fundraising planning, membership development, volunteer recruitment and development, grant writing, strategic planning, board skills, media skills, message development and legal expertise. There was some difference in perceived requirements between volunteer and staffed groups as far as capacity building. The volunteer group's top request was support with volunteer recruitment and development while the staffed group's requested support with major donor programs and fundraising planning.

Entrenchment: How to entrench your organization to reduce impacts of changes in government.

This is an important aspect of trail organizational development especially when municipal councils change every four years. Have your trail included in the official plan of the municipality, transportation and trail master plans. Have your group mentioned and linked on the Municipality's website, the Tourism Agency's website etc. Create as many partnerships as possible where they make sense especially with local community groups.

Other ways that help entrench your organization is to be involved in policy and development changes through inclusion on consultation mailing lists for development applications on Crown Land, be on the consultation lists through municipality's, government ministries like Transportation and Natural Resources. Provide services that are a value to municipalities, other community groups etc. There are many ways your group can become "a value" to the community. By having value, your group has a greater chance of survival when government changes or when one funding source dries up. A list of what you can offer the community should be reflected in your terms of reference document.

5.3 Policies and Resources

The following enumerates the policies and resources that trail organizations should create and keep updated since they are the heart of the operation. Many funding organizations look for these documents when receiving a funding application. The policies and resources can be broken down into two different categories although there are overlapping resources that apply to both. The categories are resources of the organization and resources of the board of directors and staff. Professional organizations of all different models have these resources at their fingertips and use them effectively to market, promote and attract new board members, funding, and projects. There are many websites that provide outlines, templates and articles on issues and solutions that the not-for-profit sector faces. A good place to start would be at the Charity Village website (www.charityvillage.org) where there are many links to other organizations who have articles and resources geared for Not-For-Profit and Volunteer organizations.

5.3.1 Media Tool Kit

Whether your organization is big or small, old or new, there are many benefits from using established public relations and communications techniques that can help you to accomplish your plans and achieve your goals. The Ontario Trillium Foundation has a well established, proven public relations tool kit for not-for-profit organizations to use. This tool kit is user friendly and will help staff with and without previous promotional experience. Visit the Trillium website (www.trilliumfoundation.org) to download the tool kit (Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2006).

Resources of the Organization

Mandate and Vision

The mandate and vision statements of the organization are necessary to explain the core business to outside world and help focus board and staff. Mission and vision statements are management tools that when applied appropriately, have the potential to help improve your organization's probability of success. However, it's important to keep in mind, that these are only two of the many tools available to your organization in the development of your toolkit. Robinson explains the difference between a vision and mission statement “We like to describe a vision statement as a 'picture of the future'. While a mission statement talks about the organization's purpose, (i.e. direction), a vision statement talks about what the organization would like to be. The easiest and most practical way of simply delineating between a mission and vision is to describe the mission as the journey and the vision as the destination.” (Robinson, 2002). Mandate and vision are statements that need to be advertised and publicised in order to attract funding, trail users and other support to the organization. These statements need to be concise, fairly short and encompassing. This is a good exercise to take your board through; it is exciting to dream about why everyone is already sitting around the table.

Business Plan

A solid Business Plan is the key to any successful business. As the old adage says, businesses that fail to plan, plan to fail. A straight forward sample business plan is included (Appendix 8.4) that is easy to follow. The business plan is the master document of the organization which all the other plans fall underneath of and are more like addendums that can stand alone but work better as a package. Business plans evolve over time and should be kept up to date at all times. Updating your group's business plan should be a scheduled task every year. Many funding organizations request your business plan submitted with any requests for funding.

Strategic Plan

Most groups don't have a Strategic Plan but it is one of those plans that once a group has become organized and the business plan has been written should be completed. This plan lays out the short, middle and long term goals of the group with implementation strategies and timelines. This plan gives staff and the board real timelines to work towards and keeps the board and staff focused. Strategic Plans are a milestone of many organizations. It demonstrates that the organization is looking to the future. Groups with Strategic Plans had a higher degree of growth correlated with human resources, governance, achieving program goals, financial management and collaboration with other partners. Staffed organizations with Strategic Plans had an average 20% growth over groups without a plan (Institute for Conservation Leadership, 2004).

Trails Master Plan

Groups that have trail Master Plans have a greater sense of community desire and have the “plan” to move forward on trail development. Many groups have been successful partnering with their local municipality or city to develop this plan. There are also many examples of

Trail Master Plans from other groups. Contact the Ontario Trails Council or Trans Canada Trail Ontario office for some groups you can contact to get a copy of their plan. It will give you a sense of what information should be included in the report. Many groups that have this plan can move forward to the next step of applying for funding.

Marketing Plan

A Marketing Plan is another plan that isn't necessary in the infancy of organizations, but demonstrates the successful evolution of the group. Many groups form a marketing committee to look after the events, advertising, and the public image of the organization. This committee is invaluable to staff as there is a spokesperson for the group and provides leadership and volunteers for events. This marketing committee may also be responsible for creating fundraising campaigns and/or writing and implementing fundraising plans.

Fundraising Plan

Most groups require some level of public funds to undertake their mandate. That level of support from the public varies from group to group, but public funds are still an important part of any group's budget. Any fundraising activities should have a plan associated to it to ensure greater success. This plan can be as simple as a broad overview of all fundraising activities that are to be undertaken that operating year or can be detailed to a specific event. Many organizations have a fundraising committee within their structure and having a fundraising plan will help direct the volunteers and staff. Groups that had board involvement in a Strategic Plan, a written budget and a budget component for professional development had a much higher degree of success with fundraising (Institute for Conservation Leadership, 2004).

Partnerships

The importance of valuable partnerships for any organization can't be stated enough; they can make or break an organization. Creating strategic partnerships can help your organization in many ways; by sharing information and resources, collaborating on unique projects, attracting funding, access to new and different markets etc. The Board of Directors should have a session on partnerships which they would identify the partnerships that they would like to see developed as part of Strategic Planning. Many partnerships are developed as opportunity arises, but strategic partnerships are sought and fostered to directly help the organization. Many funding proposals now ask; who you work with and who your partners are. Funders like to see partnerships between groups so efforts are not duplicated and information can be better dissimilated. See Appendix 7.3 for a list of partnerships the Park-To-Park Trail Association has formed to help complete their mandate.

5.3.3

Resources of the Board of Directors and Staff

Conflict Resolution Policy

The Board of Directors should have a Conflict Resolution Policy in place. This policy will guide directors and staff with any conflict within the board, user groups or the public.

Director's Handbook

Every board member should have their own organization handbook. This handbook is a valuable resource for all directors as it allows directors to organize and access all the policies of the organization, minutes, board package information, and human resources information. This resource could also be used to recruit new board members as well as keeping current board members organized and informed. The organization should provide each board member with a binder that has the relevant tabs, policies, plans etc. Board members are then responsible for keeping their binder up to date by including the minutes and director's package information from each board meeting.

Biographies

Many board members only see each other at the meetings of the organization and don't have the opportunity to mix and mingle. The connection of the board members outside of the meetings can go a long way to cementing the cohesiveness of the board. Personal knowledge of directors can create new perceptions of issue positions and foster respect for fellow board members. One way to create this interpersonal atmosphere is to compile a biography for every board member. Each board member submits a short paragraph of their education, professional careers, personal interests, family or what ever they feel important in expressing who they are as people. The Biographies are part of the board's handbook and updated when new board members join and others step away. Many funding organizations and foundations are interested in the depth of the experience of a board and many request a summary of who is guiding the organization to its goal.

Connection Tree

This is a great exercise for board members and staff alike. Many partnerships, funding opportunities and other gains made by organizations are successful because someone knew someone; it's the six degrees of separation model. Make sure you undergo this exercise with everyone in your office, or organization. You never know who knows who. In one situation an office underwent this activity but no one asked the secretary who she knew. As it happened, her cousin was a top executive for a major Canadian bank and which was one of the corporations on the list this organization was targeting.

It is a difficult process to start as people don't always value their connections, associations and friendships. The best way is to keep it on the board agenda until you get feedback from everyone on your board and in your office. It is important for people to realize you aren't asking them to approach that person on behalf of the organization if they don't feel comfortable with doing that. A staff person or a delegation from the organization, may undertake that task. The Connection Tree can be used for a variety of reasons, funding is always the first reason to come to mind, but other reasons like problem solving, resource sharing, connecting to government, pro bono services, etc. Keep the list current by doing this with the group every year and when a new person joins the organization.

Policies

Often organizations, especially volunteer and not-for-profits, don't develop policies until there is a need and it is usually a crisis situation. This is when you don't have time to start drafting policy. Policies are benchmarks of organizations. There are so many available

examples of the different policies that your organization should have little reason to write your own from scratch. A quick search on the internet or a call to another trail group should provide the policy template. The following is a list of policies that your organization should have. It is by no means a complete list as policies are created for certain situations outside of the ordinary and need to be specific to your needs. An annual review of all policies of the organization should be scheduled for the first board meeting after the Annual General Meeting. This would act as a refresher course for board members and should be undertaken by either a board or staff member.

Human Resources Policy and Procedures

Every non-profit/ voluntary sector organization with employees should develop Human Resources policies and procedures. These policies should reflect your organization's values and need to be regularly reviewed and updated. Make sure that you review the legislation section to ensure that your policies comply with legislation relating to employment. This policy provides the necessary information for both Staff and the Personal Committee/Board of Directors. Boards can play a variety of roles in Human Resources policy development; the important thing is to clearly define that role. The Board may form a human resources committee to write policies and procedures, or they may delegate this duty to the Executive Director. Often, it is the responsibility of the Board to give final approval on all policies. Also, the Board may set a time frame for reviewing Human Resources policies, or they may delegate this responsibility (HRVS, 2004).

Accounting Policy

In the wake of corporation accounting irregularities like Enron and Worldcom, organizations are being encouraged to become more transparent with accounting practises especially when they are operating with government or public funding. This policy provides details for such activities as the way invoices are received, paid and by when, what date the annual audit needs to be completed by, petty cash, credit cards. This policy provides guidance to the Treasurer and staff to ensure all financial requirements are met.

Many funding organizations are starting to ask for this policy to ensure their funding is not being misappropriated. This is also a good document to have on hand as new staff or board members joining the organization and need to be brought up to speed with the daily business practises of the organization. All board members should be familiar with the accounts policy especially as they are the directors legally responsible for the management of the organization.

Loyalty, Duty and Conflict of Interest Policy

Depending on the organization, many trail groups have user group or stakeholder representation on the board of Directors. Although they are there to represent the view point of the associated group, they are also there to serve as Directors in the group which they sit. Their decisions need to reflect the best interests of the organization as a whole. It is a hard task to leave your other membership at the door and this is an issue that many volunteer boards struggle with. It can weaken or divide the board. By providing the Loyalty, Duty and Conflict of Interest Policy to each board member in their Directors Handbook, every board member knows the expectation of them as Directors of the organization.

Code of Conduct Policy

This policy covers the same concerns raised under the Loyalty, Duty and Conflict of Interest Policy above. The code of conduct policy applies to the Board of Directors but also to staff of the organization.

Overtime Agreement

All organizations should have an Overtime Agreement signed with their staff as per Ontario Ministry of Labour standards.

Communications Policy

Many organizations have a Communications Policy. This policy is very handy for a variety of reasons but mainly to keep a consistent message for media, public and government. This should happen regardless of whether the organization is in a crisis or not. Appoint the chair or co-chair to speak to enquiries of a contentious nature, or have the senior staff directed to deal with the media. It is important everyone knows who the point person is for media contact. Conflicting messages convey disorganization and unprofessionalism. If board members are assigned the task of speaking with the media, ensure that you have all the facts on the subject before you speak with them. If the media calls, you don't necessarily need to speak with them immediately; a time can be scheduled to speak with them. This is handy when you are unprepared and need some time to focus your thoughts as well as speak with senior staff or the Board Chair.

5.4

Funding

Organizations that hire a fundraising person as one of the first three staff positions have a better chance of success. Fundraising is a full time job which the Coordinator of the project doesn't have time to do well enough on top of all the other daily activities they are responsible for. The good news is that there are a number of funding organizations available to trail groups. Before you start pounding on doors of funding donors, what are your plans for that funding and how much are you asking for? Having a fundraising plan for each campaign, or activity, provides clear and concise answers to those questions. The funding pool is limited and is being drawn upon by many different groups. Your project must be unique and well presented, or it will not be considered. Here is a list of questions your group should consider before you approach any funding organizations to help write your fundraising plan (see above section on fundraising plans).

Do Your Homework - Know your donor organization, know the key contact in the organization, know the program criteria, always call, if possible and set up a face to face meeting if you can.

Know What You Are Asking For - Why are you approaching this particular funding source? Are you asking for an in-kind donation, cash or both? How much and what are you offering the funder? An opportunity to support their community, a sponsorship opportunity, or a partnership opportunity? How can you distinguish yourself? How can you show that you and your project are unique and creative?

Build Relationships - Build relationships; start off small, recognise your supporters. Remember to say thank you and maintain relationships.

Prepare a Strong Proposal - Show how the work you do directly benefits the community, show how the project will live on after you have finished, be concise, clear and concrete. Have a well thought out proposal, know and include the name and contact information of the current contact person, include a cover letter, make sure there are no typos or other mistakes, do not include a lot of unnecessary information, follow-up with a phone call; if you did not get funding, ask why?

Keep Current - Find out what funding programs are out there by searching the internet, ask partners who they have recently received funding from, government staff or announcements. New programs are created every year; others are discontinued. Read newspapers; find out about new companies and ideas (Green Source, 2005).

Many trail groups have found funding in “non-traditional” sources by creating unique partnerships and projects. For example, the Chatham-Kent group received funding through the Tall Grass Association to re-introduce prairie grasses to the area. The funding was to plant native grass species alongside their new trail and also paid for a set of stairs down to the trail from the parking lot to see these species of rare grasses. The group needed to build a set of stairs regardless but this allowed them to fund it from a unique source and provide an attraction alongside the trail.

The following is a list of funding sources which have previously donated to trail groups. This list is by no means exhaustive as new funding programs constantly announced and some funding comes from partnerships outside of traditional grants.

Ontario Trillium Foundation: The funding for the Ontario Trillium Foundation comes from the casino and lottery proceeds. They receive \$100 Million a year to fund not-for-profits and other community groups. This has historically been a great funding source for trail groups in Ontario. Any funding request must fit into the goals of the Provincial Government (trails through the Trails Strategy is a goal). Trillium has staff represented regionally in the province who will assist you with your application. To find out who is your representative, visit their website (www.trilliumfoundation.org) and meet with them. This staff person is responsible for “selling” your funding request to their volunteer board. If they are well versed in your project and understand the issues and possible outcomes, that selling job becomes easier. Trillium is becoming more project focused rather than funding just one aspect of the group like administration or staff. If you can develop a project than include these elements with a specific outcome, your chances are greatly increased of being successful. There are two types of funding streams with Trillium, regional and provincial. Their website explains what the guidelines are for both types of funding, what is required to apply for them and the application forms (Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2006). Only about one of every nine regional applications are successful and only one of every four are successful for the provincial submissions.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: This Federal Department has a variety of programs which staff can be secured for an organization. The Job Creation Program allows staff to work for an organization on various length contracts to develop job ready skills. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada pays the person their unemployment benefits for that period while they work for the group. They will also pay some soft costs like Workman Safety Insurance Board premiums, mileage and office costs. The only downfall of this program is that the person is still required to find other paid employment as they are considered to be on Unemployment Insurance. If the person finds another job, then the organization will have to engage in the interview and training process all over again. This is a great program for having an “intern” come work for your organization at little cost. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada also has a Summer Career Placement where they

will provide a wage subsidy to various employers. They will fund up to 100% of Not-for-Profit organizations wages for students between 15 and 30. They will also consider funding the soft costs of Workman Safety Insurance Board etc. More information and application forms can be found at www.hrsdc.gc.ca (Human Resources and Skill Development Canada, 2006).

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation: Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation is a Provincial Government program available only to groups who are within Northern Ontario. Northern Ontario Heritage Fund has an internship program for students who attended a Northern Ontario high school or accredited college or university and are 29 years old or under. They provide up to 90% of the salary of the intern for a six or twelve month period. The organization (employer) is responsible for the additional 10% which includes Workman Safety Insurance Board and Vacation Pay (usually around \$3,500). The application form is very reasonable which requires the employer to provide a sound training and supervision plan. Information and the application form is available on the Northern Development and Mines website (www.mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc). And as usual, speak to the staff person for your area before you apply. It will help build consensus and support but also will help you focus your application around the information they are interested in (Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, 2006).

FedNor: FedNor is another Northern initiative, but the funding through the Federal Government. They have funded start-up costs and staff for trail organizations as part of their Community Development program. FedNor usually funds up to 49% of a project with the balance of the project funding coming from other non-federal sources. Trails fit in their Community Economic Development program. FedNor also has internship program much like Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. They also fund up to 90% of the cost on a one year basis. FedNor also have regional staff to assist groups with applications and sourcing projects. More information for contacts and the application forms can be found at www.strategis.ic.gc.ca (Industry Canada, 2006).

Trails For Life Fund: Trails for Life is a provincial grant program with a commitment to provide up to \$440,000 in grants annually for the next five years. The goal of the Trails for Life funding program is to increase physical activity of Ontarians. They also support the health and economic benefits of trails through strategic investments that support a higher quality of life through policy, research and implementation projects with a provincial scope that address one or more of the following strategic directions of the Ontario Trails Strategy (Ministry of Health Promotion, 2006). More information about this grant stream can be found at www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/sportandrec/trailsstrategy/default.asp.

Communities in Action Fund: The Communities In Action Fund aims to help bring about a physical activity and community sport culture in Ontario by helping local and provincial not-for-profit organizations provide and enhance opportunities for physical activity and community sport and recreation. This initiative is a key piece of ACTIVE2010: Ontario's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy that aims to help Ontarians be more physically active. Eligible program applicants can receive non-capital funding for projects falling under one or a combination of categories covering planning, implementation, and/or development (Ministry of Health Promotion, 2006). More information about this grant stream can be found at www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/sportandrec/ciaf/fund.asp.

Community Business and Development Offices: Community Futures Development Corporations support community economic development by assisting Ontario's rural and northern communities to strengthen and diversify their economies. With 37 corporations in rural southern Ontario and 24 in Northern Ontario, Community Futures are well positioned to

offer local solutions to local needs (Community Futures Development Corporations, 2006). There are various funding streams and amounts granted. For more information contact your local office. A list of offices can be found at www.ontcfdc.com.

Environment Canada: Environment Canada has a great website called Green Source that lists government and private foundations that provide funding, mainly ones that provide funding to groups that have an environmental philosophy. Groups can search by different criteria to help target funders that match their goals best. More information can be found at www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction (Green Source, 2005).

Charity Village: Charity Village is a Not-For-Profit resource website. There is a lot of information on possible funding foundations. The list links can be found at www.charityvillage.com (Charity Village, 2006).

Local Service Groups: Many sections of trail have been built in communities by local service groups like Rotary Club and Lions Clubs. Sometimes, these groups just want to donate money to have the trail built or are interested having their membership actively participate with trail building.

5.5 Board Development

The Ontario Trails Council has completed an integrated Board Training process and will share the resources with groups wishing to undertake the same (Connor, 2006). Contact the Ontario Trails Council for more information.

5.6 Insurance

Trail insurance is a complex topic. Most trail groups carry both Directors and Officers Insurance for their organization as well as liability insurance if they operate or manage trail. The issue of trail insurance in Ontario is in constant flux. To get the best up-to-date information, call the Ontario Trails Council or Trans Canada Trail Ontario for the information.

5.7 Trail Group Health Checklist- Considerations

The Trail Group Health Check List (Appendix 7.3) is for groups to self assess where they are as far as development. Organizations can also use this list to create a development schedule for board and staff to follow.

6.0

CONCLUSIONS

Trails throughout the world continue to be used as significant outlets for recreation, conservation, education, tourism and alternative transportation strategies (Silbergh, 1995). These broad categories make trails multi-jurisdictional which often create more challenges for the groups building trails. When the opportunity to build a new rail-trail arises, something remarkable often happens to a community. Well-funded public agencies that build roads do not exist for creating trails. Instead, individuals, state and local government, the private sector and community-based groups must unite in the common purpose of improving their community. By reconnecting people, the process of trail building also becomes a process of community building at the grass roots level (American Trails, 2006).

This report clearly illustrates how much work is left to do in the Trails Community to reach the goal laid out in the Ontario Trail's Strategy to create the World Class Trail system. It also shows how much hard work has already been undertaken at a grass roots level in this province. People who volunteer their time to create trails, operate organizations and promote their use are to be commended. Trails are a noble cause. The trails community needs to recognize this themselves and work to help promote the idea to a broader audience. Many communities proudly promote their trails and, in many cases, it defines a community by improving resident's quality of life. The development of Regional Trail Committees has been sporadic in Ontario as illustrated in the case studies. Provincial organizations like Trans Canada Trail Ontario and the Ontario Trails Council have spent many hours promoting the concept to local trail groups. Some trail groups have come to this structure on their own, after identifying the need. Although there are many different governance models and structures to Regional Trail Committees, the common goal they share is problem solving, resource sharing and advocacy within their membership to a larger audience.

7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 7.1

CASE STUDIES

7.1.1

Oxford Trails Council

Organization: The Oxford Trails Council is a new organization created in March 2006 at the suggestion of the Ontario Trails Council and Trans Canada Trail Ontario. The gap in this area of the Trans Canada Trail suggested little previous trail development or coordination other than with the Health Unit creating a trail guide. There was a small portion of the Trans Canada Trail built in Tillsonburg, but there was no other development of Trans Canada Trail in Oxford County. In the initial meetings, the Oxford Trails Council recognized the community needed to be involved in the project to foster ownership and municipal staff to support trails where possible. There are currently twenty-five various interested parties involved with the Oxford Group. The purpose of the group is to be a support group for different stake holders, address concerns, to advance concept of a County Trails Master Plan, and show commitment to trails in the area. They have also identified the Oxford Trails Council as a venue to share information/communication, link between user groups, municipalities, Province, and larger organizations like the Ontario Trails Council and help interpret how the provincial Ontario Trails Strategy can work in Oxford County. Other goals include improving access and amenities to trails for recreational and tourism potentials and to work to maintain and conserve existing trails.

Mandate: The mandate of the Oxford Trails Council is bring together trail stakeholders who are interested in the co-ordination, preservation, development, management and use of trails in Oxford County. The group will not be engaging in actual trail building in the near future but rather coordinating use of trails and educating people about trail use (Oxford Trails Network, 2006).

Office Arrangement: Oxford Trails Council is strictly a volunteer organization at this point and doesn't have an office.

Human Resources: Currently, Oxford Trails Council doesn't have any staff other than the paid staff of organizations who sit on their board as members. Oxford Trails Council would like to have paid staff and feel that the drafting of a Trails Master Plan will lay the foundation which will help attract funding for staff in the future.

Funding: The Oxford Group hasn't started to fundraise yet. One of the groups under the umbrella of the council did receive funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation for developing a plan for moving forward with trail development.

Equipment: The Oxford Trails Council doesn't have any equipment, office or trail. Trails within the City/Town limits of Woodstock, Ingersoll and Tillsonburg are maintained under the respective municipal parks department.

Sustainability Planning: This organization is in the early stages of their development and is still focusing on the first steps of becoming organized; sustainability planning hasn't entered the picture yet.

Regional Trail Committees: The Oxford Trails Council has organized as a Regional Trail Committee. The Council has built a solid base of stakeholders which includes representation from the City of Woodstock, Town of Tillsonburg, Norwich Township, Southwest Oxford Township, Tourism Oxford, Oxford Planning Department, Oxford County Public Health Unit, Woodstock Nature Club, Ingersoll Naturalists, Oxford Trail Committee, Woodstock Cycling Club, ATV Association, Snowmobile Club, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. This group has had a few meetings and plans to become trail advocates in the area.

Trail Development: Up until a few years ago, trail development was fragmentary and received little support from the larger community and municipal councils. There was no official information on trail locations, uses, etc., thus, making the research on existing trails a challenge (Boratto, 2006). Since then, attitudes towards trail development has been more positive. This change has helped with the formation of the Thames Trail Association. This group is investigating the development of a trail from Woodstock to Ingersoll along the Thames River. The Thames Trail group members include representatives from Tourism Oxford, City of Woodstock, Oxford Small Business Improvement Centre, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, City of Woodstock, Oxford Planning Department, Oxford County Public Health Unit, Ingersoll Trail group and private citizens. The Thames Trail Association just received an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant to do the groundwork for development of this trail. The consultant will be developing a three stage report. In stage one, existing trail inventory and information will be gathered. Stakeholders will be contacted; a review of possible locations of new trail development, trail routing and the associated challenges will be defined. The second stage will investigate the establishment of trail concepts. Trail facility and infrastructure requirements will be defined and construction specifications and standards will be drafted. After this information is assembled, a public meeting will be held. Following the community consultation, the project design will be finalized and put forth for public and council review and approval. Once this plan is approved, then the task of grant writing and fundraising will begin so the plan can become a reality. The Oxford Trails Council fully supports the activities of the Thames Trail Association and are eager to see the results from the consultant's work.

The Oxford Trail Council does have a subcommittee which maintains the Hickson Trail. This abandoned rail corridor is owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation and managed by the

Ministry of Natural Resources. The Oxford Trails Council signed an agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources for maintenance when the previous trail group who looked after the Hickson Trail became defunct. Although outside their current mandate, the group feared losing this trail from their network if Natural Resources decided to close the trail due to lack of maintenance.

The development of the gap areas of the Trans Canada Trail in Oxford County is slow to gather momentum. Currently only a section of Trans Canada Trail in the County is in Tillsonburg. At a recent meeting, there is some progress with the interested parties to review all the mapping each municipality has to look at routing options for Trans Canada Trail through Oxford County. This task should be completed shortly then the group will look at the different options and associated issues with each route.

Issues and Lessons: As this group is fairly new, they are in the beginning stages of development and definition of the roll and direction for the group.

Required Support: Oxford Trails Council requires trail community support on developing the organization beyond the initial will to have a regional group in place. They indicated that this report with the other case studies will really help them with moving forward to be the viable group that the community and their partners envision (Boratto, 2006). They also feel that a staff person working in their organization would greatly help them move forward with their mandate and spur on trail development in the County.

7.1.2

Chatham-Kent Trails Council

Organization: The Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee is an interesting case study as they are currently working through the growing pains of a new organization. The whole trails movement in Chatham-Kent started with a staff from Wallaceburg.ca successfully bringing partners together. Over the past several years, individual communities within the municipality of Chatham-Kent have developed and maintained walking or cycling trails. Some of these trails were created at a municipal level before amalgamation. Others, such as the Trillium Trail in Dresden and the water trails initiative in Wallaceburg, were grass-roots initiatives. Since then, the Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee have organized to become a Regional Trail Committee which aligns with the Municipality's geographic boundaries.

The Chatham-Kent group formally organized after October 2003 when the council endorsed their route recommendation for the Trans Canada Trail through the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. They decided that their membership will comprise of one representative from each community trail organization. Currently ten organizations contribute members and others are welcome to join. The executive consists of a Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer that are elected from within the membership on a one year term. Within the group, there are three subcommittees; funding, communications and trail development which are chaired by members of the Council.

After the initial structuring of the Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee, they began supporting pilot projects in specific communities to aid trail development action plans according to councils mandate. Projects to date include trail blazing in Thamesville, fundraising and trail development in South Kent and environmental conservation and trail building in Wallaceburg.

The Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee is a group that has had a rapid rise, has now hit a bit of a plateau but has a strong volunteer foundation that is dedicated to work

through the outstanding issues, mainly insurance and risk management with the municipality (Chatham-Kent Regional Trail Council, 2005).

Mandate: The mandate of the Chatham-Kent Trails Committee is trail development, and working in cooperation with other community partners. They advocate healthy, active and safe lifestyles that contribute to building sustainable rural and urban communities throughout Chatham-Kent.

Office Arrangement: Currently the Chatham-Kent group does not have any office space. At a recent meeting, the group decided to check with their municipal partners to enquire if there was some space that a staff person could be accommodated if funding is secured (Gray, 2006).

Human Resources: The Chatham-Kent group does not have any staff. This Regional Trail Committee is comprised of volunteers with support from Municipal staff. The group recognizes the importance of having paid staff and obtaining the necessary funding to hire staff is a priority of this group.

Funding: The Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee hasn't sought funding as the organizational foundation is still being laid. Municipality of Chatham-Kent has pledged \$100,000 for trail development and are paying for the Transportation Master Plan and the Trail's Master Plan. Chatham-Kent Trail Committee has started grass roots fundraising with BBQ's and supporting the other membership trail groups with their own events. Expenses are presently being paid for through the generous financial and in-kind donations of their membership. There is not membership fee required at this point to join the committee (Chatham-Kent Regional Trail Council, 2005).

Sustainability: As the group is still laying the foundation and seeking initial seed money, sustainability for the organization hasn't been an issue yet. They realize that the key to any organization's success is paid staff and this has become a short and long term goal of the organization.

Regional Trail Committees: Chatham-Kent does act as a Regional Trail Committee as there is representation from ten community trail organizations on the Council. With 205 kms of Trans Canada Trail, this group supports a large number of community trail organizations under its banner. The Chatham-Kent Trails Council, as the coordinating body of the trails movement in Chatham-Kent will help to ensure the viability of the individual trail groups. This support will help guarantee that trails will be built and maintained, primarily through volunteer and grass-roots efforts, for the benefit of all citizens of Chatham-Kent. The Council can also act in an advisory capacity to the Municipality to determine areas of priority in the development of trails throughout the region. The Chatham-Kent Trail Committee have identified the ability to provide representation to provincial, national and international trails organizations to both enhance local knowledge and to promote Chatham-Kent outside the region.

Trail Development: When Wallaceburg.ca was created, it advertised itself as an organization that was interested in helping local groups develop a positive internal and external image for the community. Various people were approached to support community trail development under this model. As the theme progressed, the concept of having the Trans Canada Trail through the municipality was introduced and the plans for making it happen were developed. On July 7, 2003, Chatham-Kent Council directed the Wallaceburg.ca committee to have a series of meetings with local communities to develop trail routes for Chatham-Kent. Wallaceburg.ca met with twelve Chatham-Kent communities resulting in the formation of eleven community committees. These committees were responsible for creating an inventory of existing trails, the associated issues with each route and detailed list of any risks associated

with the proposed routes. Some of the concerns identified included Municipal Planning issues, Ministry of Transportation and the criteria of the Trans Canada Trail Foundation. The community committees then appointed one representative to participate in the Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee. At the first meeting of this Regional Trail Committee, they reviewed the inventory and the input from various trail committees and drafted a route for the Trans Canada Trail to pass through Chatham-Kent. On October 27, 2003, the proposed route was presented to Chatham-Kent Council. The proposed route was endorsed with the understanding that sections of the trail may have to be modified in the future to take into consideration traffic concerns, specific destination points, etc. At this time, Council passed four new motions regarding the trail. Trans Canada Trail Foundation has confirmed the registration, and the group started to work on the Transportation and Trails Master Plans and planning fundraising activities.

Since October 2003, the structure of the Chatham-Kent Trails Committee has been refined. The eleven community trail committees have been given jurisdiction over trails within their geographical area. They have also been recognized as the organizations who will actually build the trail. Each community committee has elected one representative to sit on the Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee. This Regional Trail Committee is responsible for ensuring co-operation amongst the eleven members and addressing concerns which affect local trail groups. It has incorporated under the title of Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Council. It has worked on developing positive models for development through the Ontario Trails Council and looks forward to significant increases in trail development and usage over the next couple of years.

Recently, Chatham-Kent Trails Committee has applied for one time funding available through the Municipality which they hope will start construction on a six kilometre stretch of Trans Canada Trail. This will be the first trail construction effort this group has undertaken. Construction is planned for the summer of 2007 (Grey, 2006).

Issues and Lessons: The next steps for the group after the council endorsement was to create a business plan, register the trail with Trans Canada Trail and sign the trail. Complications arose with these next steps with concerns of risk management. The trails council is still working through these issues with their director of operations, the insurance company and the municipal risk manager. Trans Canada Trail Ontario and the Ontario Trails Council are working with Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee to provide other examples of how these issues were successfully solved in other municipal jurisdictions (Andrews, 2006, Gray, 2006).

Required Support: The CK group indicated that Trans Canada Trail Ontario staff visiting to providing the provincial picture, share stories and examples of what other trail groups are doing and problems they were currently facing in the province was very beneficial to them. They felt alone in their struggle with the risk managers and the quagmire of trail insurance issues. The group said they felt better when they realized that they weren't alone in the struggle and other groups had triumphed over these issues. They indicated that staff support from the provincial body of Trans Canada Trail was the required support they desired. Linking other Risk Managers from like municipalities with Chatham-Kent's Risk Manager to discuss how they overcame the issues is support they desperately require. The frustration on the Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee is rising and if some solutions aren't found soon, the committee will start to loose members. There have been some recent developments that will lead to solutions in the long run.

Chatham-Kent Trans Canada Trail Committee is a member of the Ontario Trails Council and have aspirations to host a future Ontario Trails Council conference (Chatham-Kent Regional Trail Council, 2005).

7.1.3

Huronian Trails and Greenways Organizations

Organization: Huronia Trails and Greenways is a registered not-for-profit charitable organization. Huronia Trails and Greenways was formed from a consultant's recommendation to manage abandoned railway corridors as recreational trails. From this recommendation, the Ontario Trails Council, when still managing the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario before the formation of Trans Canada Trail Ontario, provided two staff people to route the Trans Canada Trail through Simcoe County. The original focus of Huronia Trails and Greenways was on managing the abandoned rail corridors in the County.



This has slightly changed over the years to focus more on Healthy Active Lifestyles. The Board of Directors of Huronia Trails and Greenways is much like many other Regional Trail Committees with wide range representation. It is comprised of municipalities, user groups, health unit, environmental clubs and interested individuals (Baldwin, 2006).

Mandate: Huronia Trails and Greenways is dedicated to promote and enable the development of a sustainable network of trails and greenways and coordinate the development of the Trans Canada Trail in Simcoe County (Huronian Trails and Greenways, 2004).

Office Arrangement: Currently, Huronia Trails and Greenways has an office located in the President's home where there are two staff members. President Frieda Baldwin has been instrumental in sustaining Huronia Trails and Greenways over the past years and having the office in her home is one more example of the dedication of people in the trails community have towards keeping trail groups alive.

Human Resources: Huronia Trails and Greenways has one full-time employee until November 2007 and one part-time employee until April 2007. They rely of their volunteers who have put in many hours keeping this organization operational. Staff is a sustainability issue with this organization as it is with many trail groups (Baldwin, 2006). They also run a volunteer program where they coordinate interested people with the local trail groups. Volunteer opportunities may include: joining a Trail Patrol, Adopt-A-Trail project with your school, youth or community group, help with trail research in the county, coordinate or volunteer at events, help with trail construction projects, help with public and media relations, lead guided hikes on trails, or become a Director and sit on the Board.

Huronian Trails and Greenways also has an Adopt-A-Trail Program. They are in partnership with a number of local trail management groups build, maintain, and enhance trails in Simcoe County. Volunteer groups can participate in the program by assisting local trail managers with projects. The goal of the Adopt-A-Trail program is to build a stronger relationship between trail managers and the community. They offer the volunteer group active involvement in building, maintaining, or enhancing local trails. People can volunteer for any length of time and don't need to make a long term commitment. Huronia Trails and Greenways also offers school programs for teachers to connect the Adopt-A-Trail project with class curriculum. Students can earn community service hours volunteering on an Adopt-A-Trail project. Other groups who have participated include Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides who earn badges for volunteering and the Adopt-A-Trail project has been combined with the annual Jamboree.

This Regional Trail Committee is very grateful of their volunteers and has a recognition

program to reward and recognize people's efforts. Every volunteer receives an Adopt-A-Trail sticker and certificate to acknowledge their contribution. After participating in three Adopt-A-Trail projects, volunteers can qualify for an Adopt-A-Trail badge (Huronian Trails and Greenways, 2004). They have many volunteers working on their trails but the recognition program isn't being utilized as they thought it would. Many volunteers aren't requesting the sticker or certificate (Baldwin, 2006).

Funding: Huronia Trails and Greenways relies on grants, donations and fundraising to operate. They have a membership program which individuals, groups and municipalities can belong. They have also received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Communities in Action, and Simcoe County (Huronian Trails and Greenways, 2004)

Equipment: Huronia Trails and Greenways has access to equipment like GPS's through the Muskoka-Simcoe Health Unit and the local County's GIS/Planning Department. They use volunteers to collect the data on their behalf. As Huronia Trails and Greenways coordinates volunteers, they have no trail equipment.

Sustainability Planning: Since the original inception of Huronia Trails and Greenways, there have been some changes with local trail operators that HTG historically supported. The North Simcoe Rail Trail still operates a board and is a member of the Huronia Trails and Greenways. Other trail systems like the Uthoff Trail, has seen their board fold and trail maintenance has reverted back to the municipality. Springwater is also struggling with the cost of insurance and are looking at municipal management. Due to the vicarious situation with the local trail groups, the County of Simcoe is currently reviewing a proposal to fund a staff person with Huronia Trails and Greenways to create short loop trails, plan trail events, create a better trail map and GIS based website. This Coordinator would also advocate local trail issues like the Highway 400 expansion plans and help local groups with determine trail design and facilitate funding. The structure of Huronia Trails and Greenways with this county support hasn't been determined yet; whether it will remain a stand-alone organization or revert to a committee of council. Trail groups in the County of Simcoe have been more successful under the municipal wing with the benefits of insurance, budget support and staff resources which has allowed them to expand their activities (Baldwin, 2006).

Regional Trail Committees: Huronia Trails and Greenways doesn't own or operate any trails but they do coordinate activities on trails. They are operating as a Regional Trail Committee.

Trail Development: They have since rerouted much of the original Trans Canada Trail so it would connect more communities and cities together. This has helped many to realize the benefits of trails (economically, socially and health). Huronia Trails and Greenways assist local groups with building and maintaining trails and doesn't undertake trail development on its own.

Issues and Lessons: The greatest lesson the Huronia Trails and Greenways can pass along is to utilize volunteers as much as possible. This is a hard task to accomplish if the organization relies on the volunteers to coordinate the volunteers. Some organizations have a volunteer coordinator to achieve an integrated volunteer network. An issue facing Huronia Trails and Greenways is the difficulty finding funding for infrastructure. The funding they have been able to attract is project based which pulls an organization away from their original mandate.

Required Support: Required support they need is funding. Huronia Trails and Greenways felt that with the limited budget they have through donations and grants, it was not enough to

actively develop more sections of the Trans Canada Trail in Simcoe County. They also felt that other funding for Human Resources would be very beneficial as they could move ahead further, farther, faster. This organization is in transition currently with the County possibly taking over. Huronia Trails and Greenways wasn't sure if this would be the best scenario but it was the only one that might keep the organization operating and provide staff to achieve their mandate of completing the Trans Canada Trail in Simcoe. Other support they would like to see was an integrated trails website where information could be posted, a chat room set up to discuss uses and examples of what other groups in Ontario were doing to solve common problems. They felt that this should be the role of the Ontario Trails Council to undertake this so they could serve the needs of their membership better. Huronia Trails and Greenways has been a member of the Ontario Trails Council for many years and their president has also served on the board for a number of terms (Baldwin, 2006).

7.1.4 Thunder Bay Recreational Trails

Organization: In 1999, a number of "Town Hall" meetings were held to encourage the development of the Trans Canada Trail in Thunder Bay. As a result, the "Thunder Trail Organization" was formed. In January 2000, Thunder Bay City Council endorsed a route through Thunder Bay for the Trans Canada Trail as proposed by the Thunder Trail (Thunder Bay Recreational Trails, 2006). In 2003 when the group was incorporated, the group expanded their mandate to encompass all recreational trails in the Thunder Bay region and took on a new name, Thunder Bay Recreational Trails. The Board of the Thunder Bay Recreational Trails is comprised of nine volunteers who are personally interested in trail development; the one exception is the City liaison. This group is non-motorized and don't advocate motorized use on urban trails (Albanese, 2006).

Mandate: Thunder Bay Recreational Trails is a not-for-profit registered charitable organization dedicated to the development, maintenance and promotion of an expanded network of shared-use recreation trails in Thunder Bay and region. All of the City of Thunder Bay's trails will be linked to the Trans Canada Trail system creating a network of non-motorized trails (Thunder Bay Recreational Trails, 2006).

Office Arrangement: Currently, the Thunder Bay Recreational Trails doesn't have office space. Their limited budget operates a well designed website and phone line.

Human Resources: Thunder Bay Recreational Trails currently has no staff nor have they ever had any staff. They are a group sustained solely by volunteers and donations. Obtaining staff is one of the recently drafted strategic goals the board. They felt that it was fairly onerous to apply for an intern as they currently don't have the supervisory capacity within their volunteers. The desired staff would have to have trail experience and be self motivated. They felt that with the right staff person, the group would flourish and they would make headway in building and integrating trail.

Funding: Thunder Bay Recreational Trails has been funded by grants for specific projects but haven't received any funding for administration. They also fundraise, have a membership drive and sell maps. The dollars they raise are earmarked for better maps of the trail system, upgrading existing trails, and planning for new trails. They have roughly 50 members and these membership dollars support the limited resources of the organization.

Equipment: As the group doesn't build trail, they have no trail equipment. With no office or staff, the group relies on volunteers for any equipment required.

Sustainability Planning: This group hasn't begun to look at sustainability planning as they are in the early stages of organizational capacity. The board has developed a terms of reference and strategic points as goals but the direction of the group beyond that hasn't been fully determined.

Regional Trail Committees: Thunder Bay Recreational Trails is currently acting in a pseudo Regional Trail Committee capacity. They are regional in nature as there are no other trail groups in the immediate area doing any trail development. Thunder Bay Recreational Trails has been concentrating on the planning events, working with the City of Thunder Bay on creating a trails master plan and working with other community service organizations that have done trail development like Rotary Club. They advocate trail users and development with a variety of groups (Albanese, 2006).

Trail Development: Thunder Bay Recreational Trails has made good progress with trail marketing and awareness in Thunder Bay and the connections with the Trans Canada Trail. They have recently helped create a city-wide recreational trail map, created a trail map for the Current River Greenway (Boulevard Lake, Centennial and Trowbridge Falls Parks, Cascades Conservation area), and worked with the City to create a list of priority trails to be built (Thunder Bay Recreational Trails, 2006). Although this new organization hasn't built any trails so far, they are working in conjunction with other groups who have like the local Rotary chapter. They are currently planning on a trail link from Boulevard Lake to Centennial Park and partnering with the City to create a recreational trail master plan that would be integrated with a plan for commuter bike routes. Thunder Bay Recreational Trails is the only trail group in Thunder Bay dedicated to improving the health of residents through the use of recreational trails. The group did mention that there was a volunteer who was looking to develop a trail along the Kaministiquia River. They spoke to private landowners and were making some progress but the inability to provide liability insurance for those landowners is what quashed the dream. The Thunder Bay group would also like to see a trail from Thunder Bay to Nipigon in the future. Currently, this organization has no capacity to offer liability insurance for trails outside of the City infrastructure and insurance umbrella.

Issues and Lessons: The Thunder Bay Recreational Trails group has no experience with trail planning or construction. Because the City of Thunder Bay has built trail within their city boundaries to a city standard, the group has no experience with rural/wilderness trail construction. Lesson to pass along to other groups is that trails are very expensive. Thunder Bay Recreational Trails estimates one kilometre of trail costs \$100,000.00 within the city limits.

Required Support: Thunder Bay Recreational Trails would greatly benefit from having a staff person in place for at least 18 months. With this support, they would be able to complete the Trans Canada Trail route through Thunder Bay and build the necessary infrastructure to erect the pavilion. Staff would allow for the advocacy, trail planning and development to occur and move Trans Canada Trail development in the North to the forefront. Thunder Bay Recreational Trails said they would also like to see the required resources for planning, designing and building trails as well as a trail forum to share information and ask questions. This organization was a member of the Ontario Trails Council a few years ago but dropped their membership as they felt they weren't taking full advantage of the Ontario Trails Council's resources and money was required to keeping minimal office operations and undertaking limited marketing opportunities (Albanese, 2006).

7.1.5

Park-To-Park Trail Association



Organization: In the summer of 1998, following the recommendations from a joint meeting of Town Councils (Parry Sound and Huntsville), the Park-To-Park Trail Association formed. In 1998, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation provided \$113,000.00 to undertake a feasibility study for the Parry Sound Area Arts & Adventure Tourism Destination Steering Committee. Within the feasibility study, Park-To-Park Trail (referred to as Algonquin to Killbear Trail) was determined to be a great project to increase four-season tourism in the Muskoka / Parry Sound area.

Mandate: The mandate of the Park-To-Park Trail is to coordinate and promote the development, operation and maintenance; through individuals, members, groups, organizations, corporations, municipalities and all levels of government; an integrated, year-round, multi-use recreational trail; connecting Killbear to Algonquin Provincial Park, and providing links to several communities, features, attractions, and services in Parry Sound, Muskoka and Haliburton, as well as other provincial parks and trail networks including the Trans Canada Trail. This mandate hasn't changed over the life of the project but the project has become more encompassing than was originally anticipated.

Office Arrangement: Park-To-Park Trail Association's grants were held under the auspices of the Parry Sound Community Business and Development Centre until the group was incorporated as a charitable entity. This beneficial relationship continues as Park-To-Park Trail Association maintains an office with the Community Building and Development Centre at a reduced rent and operational cost. There are many spin-off benefits to the location as the tourism organization Georgian Bay Country is also housed there. Many partnerships and new ideas have been formed "around the water cooler" due to the daily contact of these groups.

Human Resources: Park-To-Park has two paid staff (one full time coordinator and one contract trail maintenance coordinator on a 10 month contract). New partnerships and the ability to hire staff on a contract basis have allowed Park-To-Park Trail Association to branch out into venues that enhance the trail experience and promote the project in unique ways. Staff has been hired through various grants like Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and the local Employment Services office. The Ontario Trillium Foundation also paid half of the two staff salaries for three years past the original FedNor organizational development grant.

Funding: Funding for this project is varied like most not-for-profits. Initial seed money to start the project, build the organization and to hire an intern came through FedNor. This three year funding was matched by the municipalities with that Federal funding. There was no chance of an extension of FedNor funding so new funding had to be found for year four of the project. The group was successful with applying for Ontario Trillium Foundation funding for three years, four year capital funding through Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and seven of the ten municipalities came on board for additional funding. Base funding comes from the municipalities located along the trail, both for office operations and for capital construction. Other funding comes/came from memberships, donations, fundraising and partnership projects.

Equipment: A pilot project through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Social Services allowed Park-To-Park Trail Association to hire a maintenance coordinator, purchase a vehicle and train Ontario Works Participants over a one year period. With roughly 75 people through the program over the one year period, it was deemed "successful" by the government and was

terminated. Park-To-Park Trail Association was able to keep the program running for an additional three years which provided a crew to work on the trail but with the decrease in Provincial Ontario Works case loads, it was not worth keeping the expensive insurance on the vehicle to transport a few bodies around. Park-To-Park Trail Association also operates by renting larger equipment for trail maintenance and new construction. In partnership with one of the local provincial parks, Park-To-Park Trail Association has co-funded the repair of a Pony Grader which they then have use of periodically through out the season to grade the trail. This smaller grader is the perfect size for levelling out the Seguin Trail railbed. Some of the smaller municipal partners along the trail have “given” free use of a piece of equipment for the season in lieu of money as their contribution. Other larger pieces are hired from contractors either as a single piece of equipment or as a larger fleet as part of a contracted project. Park-To-Park Trail Association has the expertise to undertake many of the construction projects themselves and contract out the larger aspects on a as need basis.

Sustainability Planning: In the fall of 2005, the Board of Directors approved implementing a Trail Pass for all uses on the trail except hiking and cottage vehicle access. Although trail passes are controversial, the challenge of finding ongoing funding and attaining sustainability attributed to this move. The trail pass was loosely based on the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance’s model but tailored to fit the Muskoka-Parry Sound area. Park-To-Park Trail Association has also branched out into trail consulting to municipalities, hospitals, and other not-for-profit groups who are interested in building trails. These trails connect to the “spine Park-To-Park Trail Association trail” but are maintained and funded by the other groups. This service has been in demand as more groups want to get involved with trails. Trails have also become event focused in Parry Sound with the World Enduro Race. Part of the 60 km circuit is based on the Park-To-Park Trail. Park-To-Park Trail Association requested that a lump sum fee be paid for use of the trail as well as a posted performance bond for damage. The Park-To-Park Trail Association board of directors decided that trails are a tourism product and if there is a tourism driven event, then a fee for use of the trail will help raise the notion that trails are not free, use is a privilege, not a right. Other events held on part of the Park-To-Park Trail include Spring Jam (ATV Festival) and often Eco-Challenges (adventure triathlons).

Regional Trail Committees: Park-To-Park Trail often operates as a Regional Trail Committee as the trail covers three Districts (Parry Sound, northern Muskoka and western Haliburton). The representation on the board comprises of user groups, municipal councillors, government agencies and interested public. Park-To-Park Trail Association has lobbied with provincial groups for changes in legislation, provided resources to other groups like Management Plans, policies and how-to knowledge. Although acting as a Regional Trail Committee. Park-To-Park Trail Association would benefit and has shown interest in participating in the Muskoka Trails Council but this committee decided to represent only Muskoka. There has also been discussions to work closer with the district snowmobile group but this hasn’t materialized into any concrete plans or actions.

Trail Development: Trans Canada Trail along the Park-To-Park Trail Association route is roughly 71kms. The route follows the Nipissing Road from the North Bay/Magnetawan area managed by Discovery Routes to the Seguin Recreational Trail. Once it meets the Seguin Trail, Park-To-Park Trail Association maintains the trail into Huntsville. The route follows the Seguin Trail which is an abandoned rail corridor and some seasonal and secondary roads. The trail group that preceded Park-To-Park Trail was the Seguin Trail Committee. This was the group that originally had the Seguin Trail route registered as Trans Canada Trail. When the

two groups merged in 2001, Park-To-Park Trail Association assumed maintenance responsibilities for the Seguin Trail and its Trans Canada Trail route. The route was then GPSed and signed. Currently, this portion of the Trans Canada Trail is open and operational. This is one of the sections of Trans Canada Trail that has users outside of the core five preferred by the Foundation. Uses outside of the five core uses allowed on the Seguin Trail portion of the Trans Canada Trail are ATV's, dogsleds and trail bikes.

Issues and Lessons: Park-To-Park Trail is an organization that is struggling to make the transition to self-sustainability. This organization has been built on government grants over the various phases but as the project nears completion, the “what now” scenario is presenting itself. Municipal governments in the area vary in size, tax base and commitment levels. Many have supported the project through its development and although recognize the ongoing maintenance costs, are feeling the draining of their own resources through provincial downloading. The ongoing issue of bridge replacement has drained the Park-To-Park Trail organization of capital funding. Although many partners have been found to help spread the costs of the bridges, Park-To-Park Trail still ends up contributing the lion's share. Funding projects at a greater level is acceptable when capital funding is available but poses a great challenges to the organization when it is not. Stable ongoing funding is this organizations largest challenge. If there was operational funding available for this group for a few years until other revenue generating projects and products could be developed, then this organization would thrive.

The greatest lesson of Park-To-Park Trail that could help other trail organizations with is to plan from day one the long-term strategies of the organization. Although staff was trying to get the board engaged in Strategic Planning exercises, board apathy made this process very cumbersome. Board apathy is a large part of the challenges of Park-To-Park Trail. When the Seguin Trail Committee and Park-To-Park Trail merged, the two board memberships were amassed without much thought to structure. This large board then struggled with repetitive representation from certain user groups and others feeling like they had no voice. In this case, inclusion was not a productive exercise. Board restructuring was met with resistance from certain groups and there it remains undealt with today. There is no structured conflict resolution method utilized by the Park-To-Park Trail board although this would be very helpful when dealing with user group conflict and adjacent landowner issues.

Required Support: Support from trail organizations with sharing information of available funding resources, real life examples of problem solving or side stepping potential issues would be invaluable to a group like Park-To-Park Trail. The information sharing at Ontario Trails Council Conferences and via the e-bulletins are very helpful and Park-To-Park Trail staff would like to see more of that type of support. Other issues like communication with the Ontario Realty Corp. and other government departments would also be welcome as it would with most trail groups in the province. For this very reason, Park-To-Park Trail is a member in good standing with the Ontario Trails Council.

7.1.6

Discovery Routes Trail Association

Organization: Discovery Routes Trail Association is a Not-For-Profit organization incorporated in 1992. Originally, the group was formed through strong community support for trails in the region. Discovery Routes Trail Association is currently working on relaunching itself. They lost their office space with the local Conservation Authority which set the organization back and they are working on funding to set up the organization again.



Recently, they held a public meeting attended by 65 stakeholders to seek the community's judgment whether they should reorganize or not. The attendees overwhelmingly voted to help Discovery Routes Trail Association re-emerge as a Regional Trail Committee.

Mandate: Discovery Routes' original mandate was to market, promote and link together all recreational trails in the North Bay region including Magnetawan and South River. This mandate changed when the Trans Canada Trail was routed through the area. Discovery Routes Trail Association routed the Trans Canada Trail through the area and developed the trail in partnership with the local groups.

Office Arrangement: The organization was once housed in the North Bay – Mattawa Conservation Authority. This arrangement changed when Conservation had to rationalize their core business after a few mismanaged capital projects. Discovery Routes was not considered core business of the Conservation Authority so they were no longer allowed to remain under their umbrella. Currently, the office of the Discovery Routes Trail Association is located in one of their volunteer's houses. If the group is successful with their recent Trillium Foundation application, the group will establish an office in the local Chamber of Commerce.

Human Resources: Discovery Routes Trail Association doesn't have any paid staff. Volunteers on their board are undertaking operations and grant writing until Discovery Routes Trail Association can afford staff again. If the Trillium grant is successful, then they will be hiring a Director to oversee the sustainability planning, revitalization of local trail groups and completion of their Northern Ontario Heritage Fund grant to complete the Trans Canada Trail in North Bay. Discovery Routes Trail Association unfortunately hired a coordinator that didn't work out. This set back of six months put the organization a further step behind in rebuilding itself as a viable trail group.

Funding: In the beginning phases of Discovery Routes Trail Association, the original seed funding was provided by FedNor and the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. From this, the necessary plans were put in place to move forward for development. Recently Discovery Routes Trail Association received funding from Communities in Action to conduct two workshops to recruit and train volunteers with trail based events.

Equipment: Discovery Routes Trail Association doesn't conduct trail maintenance therefore has no equipment to do so. They rely on local groups or the municipality to undertake trail maintenance.

Sustainability Planning: Discovery Routes Trail Association is a perfect example of how venerable a trail organization is when reliant on grants, internships and good will of other government organizations. The group found themselves without an office and unable to complete capital grants when one piece of the puzzle changed. The board had discussed sustainability of the organization but the steps were never taken to move in this direction.

Regional Trail Committees: Discovery Routes Trail Association is already acting as a Regional Trail Committee which smaller local trail groups underneath their structure. Groups like Magnetawan and South River are both in transition along with Discovery Routes Trail Association who has applied for Trillium Foundation to revitalize all groups (McCourt, 2006).

Trail Development: Discovery Routes Trail Association manages 123 km of Trans Canada Trail (Discovery Routes Trail Association, 2002). They were approved for a \$500,000 Northern Ontario Heritage Fund grant for trail development in conjunction with the local trail organizations. This grant hasn't been totally spent out yet but the deadline is the fall of 2006.

Issues and Lessons: Discovery Routes is an organization that has experienced a

rollercoaster of development and setbacks. The greatest lesson they can pass along to others is to have the board address sustainability early on in the organization's development. Other thoughts included having a wide range of expertise involved at the board level from an early stage much like Rainbow Routes Association has. This includes having a diversified Board of Directors such as lawyers, engineers, business development managers etc. This allows for those opinions to be sought at the board level without having to purchase services outside the organization.

Required Support: Discovery Routes Trail Association indicated that they require long term funding and professional staff. They have worked with interns but found that this doesn't work as the Project Manager level. Due to short term funding, they have turned to government internship funding which has set the organization back as the interns don't have the required skill to keep the project moving forward. The board also needs to put plans in place to address sustainability (McCourt, 2006).

7.1.7 Eastern Ontario Trail's Alliance

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

Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance was incorporated in 1999 under the mandate provided to it by the Province of Ontario and various Municipal Corporations of Eastern Ontario (Goals and Objectives). Thanks to funding sources and partners, the Alliance has completed an inventory of abandoned rail lines and existing trails; involvement of landowners; an overall strategic Master Plan; a management plan for future operation, maintenance and marketing of the trails network; identified economic opportunities relating to trails and tourism; the creation of jobs and the production of a tourism trail map and internet web site.

Mandate: To develop, manage, maintain and market a comprehensive network of year round shared use recreational trails in the area, recognizing that there are other future uses for corridors i.e. utility. Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance will partner whenever possible. Each person sitting on the board of directors or a committee will work in good faith for the organization (Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance, 2006).

Office Arrangement: Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance rents office space from the Municipality of Tweed. By having a large office area, the organization can make use of job strategy programs to create and operate special projects and contract staff.

Human Resources: Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance has one permanent employee who is the Coordinator of the project. They also utilize many contract positions, job creation programs, and interns to help develop and operate their programs. To date, Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance has created 84 full-time and part-time positions (Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance Business Plan, 2006).

Funding: Funding for Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance has been changing as the organization matures. Originally, funding was mostly government grants but a focus on more tourism, self generated funding is occurring. Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance was the first multi-use trail group in the province to implement a trail pass. The system was a pilot project through the

Ontario Trails Council and the Trillium Trail Network and now raises a substantial amount of funding for Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance operations. Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance also hosts special events, does corporate fundraising and seeks municipal and other levels of government funding. Funding is also facilitated through partnerships with user groups, marketing and in-kind contributions.

Sustainability Planning: Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance has well established themselves as the regional body for trail development and trail tourism in the area. This has help with the stabilization of the project as well as the successful implementation of their trail pass.

Regional Trail Committees: Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance is operating as a Regional Trail Committee and was one of the five original Regional Trail Committees recognized by Trans Canada Trail Foundation.

Trail Development: Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance utilizes mechanisms for local planning and decision-making within the Provincial framework resulting in a trail system that meets the needs of local user groups and the land owners (Municipalities & Crown) and provides economic return to the area. The trail system was developed based on public consultation with different interest groups/clubs/businesses and local government thus it encourages co-operation at the local/regional level. It provides recreational opportunities for all user groups in the area, motorized and non-motorized including ATVs, biking, horse-back riding, etc. based on a shared use trail system which reduces costs and responsibilities for local users clubs. They are one of the five nodes of ATV Ontario and have created many proactive ATV campaigns around safety, signage, outreach and etiquette.

Required Support: The Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance has been lobbying for changes to the Line Fences Act and Occupiers Liability. These two pieces of legislation would help reduce their operating budget by reducing fencing costs and liability insurance premiums (Cassidy, 2006).

7.1.8

Grand River Conservation Authority

Organization: The Grand River Conservation Authority is a corporate body established to enable municipalities to jointly undertake water and natural resource management on a watershed basis for the benefit of all. In the 1800s, the Grand River was used for many purposes including transportation, water supply, and waterpower which attracted settlement to the valley. Over time, deforestation and urban settlement aggravated flood and drought conditions. Water quality in the river also deteriorated to the point where it was a public health concern. In 1932, eight municipalities banded together to form the Grand River Conservation Commission to deal with these problems. The Commission completed the Shand Dam in 1942, which was the first multi-purpose dam in Canada built for flood control and low flow augmentation to improve water quality during the dry summer months. This group also started planting trees to re-vegetate the landscape. Under the Conservation Authorities Act, the Grand Valley Conservation Authority (GRCA) was formed in 1948. This allowed all watershed municipalities to work collaboratively to address a broad range of resource management issues. To avoid any potential conflict over roles and responsibilities and to eliminate duplication of programs within the same watershed, the Grand River Conservation Authority was established in 1966 through the amalgamation of the Grand River Conservation Commission and the Grand Valley Conservation Authority (Grand River Conservation Authority, 2006).



Mandate: Based in Cambridge, the Grand River Conservation Authority is the umbrella organization for 48 conservation authorities which provide flood management and recreational opportunities for the public. The Grand River Conservation Authority owns and manages about 19,000 hectares (47,000 acres) of fragile lands. The vision of the Grand River Conservation Authority is one of leadership in ensuring a healthy and sustaining relationship between the natural environment of the Grand River watershed and the demands on this environment by all forms of life. Their mission is to work with partners to conserve the natural processes and resources that support a safe and healthy environment for future generations in the Grand River watershed (Grand River Conservation Authority, 2006). Trails are considered a passive recreational service that Grand River Conservation Authority offers but none the less, a popular product (Beaumont, 2006).

Office Arrangement: Grand River Conservation Authority has an office based in Cambridge which administers their programs and support to the other Conservation Authorities under their banner.

Human Resources: The Grand River Conservation Authority doesn't employ any additional staff to undertake trail maintenance. The trail maintenance is done on a as need basis with certain activities like grading and grass cutting completed at certain times of the year.

Funding: The Grand River Conservation Authority was the first organization to receive funding from the Trans Canada Trail Foundation in 1996 for their section of Trans Canada Trail (Beaumont, 2006, Trans Canada Trail Foundation, 2006). Since then, funding for Grand River Conservation Authority is derived mainly from user fees for the recreational activities they offer within their park properties like camping, day use of ski trails, beaches etc. but there is no fee for trail use on the railbeds. Other funding for Grand River Conservation Authority comes from the municipalities in the area. The Elora Cataract Trail Association has been successful in having their local municipality give an annual contribution of \$4,000/year towards the maintenance of one of the four trails under the Grand River Conservation Authority banner. The Grand River Conservation Authority has also had a few recent endowments from people who were regular trail users which is earmarked for trail maintenance. Since the GRCA's trails are owned, they pay municipal taxes on the property each year which is paid out of the operating funds of the GRCA (Beaumont, 2006).

Sustainability: The Grand River Conservation Authority is a sustainable organization currently. Additional funding would always be welcome but the organization can operate the services they currently provide. If there is a project that needs to be undertaken on the trail, the Foundation will fundraise for the capital to do that project. Recently, their raised \$50,000 to redeck one of their bridges.

Equipment: The Grand River Conservation Authority has their own equipment that they use for trail maintenance. If there is a larger problem that the organization can't deal with internally, they will hire a contractor to undertake the work. Trails are a lesser priority for the Grand River Conservation Authority with all the other activities and services they provide in their parks. Trails rank about 9 out of 10 on the priority scale (Beaumont, 2006).

Regional Trail Committees: The Grand River Conservation Authority is acting as Regional Trail Committee capacity for The Elora – Cataract Trailway which is one of the most popular trails in the province. This section of trail is co-owned with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. This is the only trail out of the four Grand River Conservation Authority acquired trails that are managed by a volunteer committee, the Elora-Cataract Trail Association. This group was formed out of the series of landowner consultations. Their goal is to create a

greenway or linear park through which people can explore their environment in different ways while encouraging the protection of natural and cultural heritage values (Elora Cataract Trailway Association, 2006). This committee is responsible for the management issues along the trail, promotion of the trail through a series of events and help raise funding towards maintenance. The Grand River Conservation Authority finds the relationship of having a volunteer local trail group to manage their trail on their behalf very beneficial as the local people know the issues intimately and are best positioned to advise the Grand River Conservation Authority of them. The Grand River Conservation Authority would welcome other groups to come forward to manage the other rail trails on their behalf (Beaumont, 2006). Originally, there was strong public opposition to the creation of this trail but once the trail was established and managed, all of the concerns brought forward from the public were unsubstantiated. Now, there is very strong pride to having this trail in the community's backyard (Steinberg, 2006).

Trail Development: The Grand River Conservation Authority ventured into the recreational trail business when the rail companies started to divest the rail lines in the early 1980's. The Grand River Conservation Authority Board of Directors felt that the rail beds could create trails that would greatly enhance recreational opportunities (Steinberg, 2006). The Board set forth criteria for obtaining rail lines so that any acquisitions had to include the following; a) had to link to municipalities b) had to have some unique environmental attributes c) had to link some Grand River Conservation Authority properties d) link with other trails to create a network. As there was no money in the budget for more land acquisition and the fact that trails are outside of the main core business of the Grand River Conservation Authority, fundraising for purchasing the rail lines was conducted through the Grand River Foundation. In the end, there were four rail lines that the GRCA acquired through fundraising in the community. Within these four lines, there are different ownership and management arrangements. Either these lines are owned outright, in joint ownership with another conservation authority or owned by Grand River Conservation Authority but are managed by a volunteer group. It was through the acquisition of these rail lines that the Grand River Conservation Authority became involved with the Trans Canada Trail. The trails were already established and the Trans Canada Trail designation was applied afterwards. The Grand River Conservation Authority does not have any motorized issues or use on any of their trail systems (Beaumont, 2006).

Issues and Lessons: Grand River Conservation Authority approached the land acquisition of the abandoned rail corridors as a business deal. They had one person handle all of the negotiations so things didn't become confused. They raised the money through the Foundation for the purchase. Through the acquisition process, some parcels of the rail lines were sold off to private individuals or municipalities and the connectivity was lost. This was viewed as an issue in the beginning but as the routes were rerouted through communities, this was a benefit in the long run. Reroutes provided more opportunities for economic development around trail users. Small cafés, restaurants and shops sprung up which cater to trail users. Downtown areas experienced revitalization due to the increase in trail tourism (Steinberg, 2006).

Required Support: Grand River Conservation Authority felt that since their trail system is complete and operational, they didn't require support from the trails community with trail development and maintenance. They indicated that they would welcome changes in legislation around the Line Fences Act and Occupiers Liability. Grand River Conservation Authority is not a direct member of the Ontario Trails Council but are part of the Ontario Parks Association which is a member (Beaumont, 2006).

7.1.9

Rainbow Routes Association



Organization: The Rainbow Routes Association was formed in 1996 as a community initiative. In 1998, Rainbow Routes Association was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation (Rainbow Routes Trail Association, 2006). They have a board of directors of 12 members from the community who are interested in trail development. They had a board with some municipal representatives but they found that little was getting down without the grassroots citizen level (McIntosh, 2006).

Mandate: To bring together the many volunteer trail groups throughout the Greater City of Sudbury to develop and promote the Trans Canada Trail through the Sudbury region (Rainbow Routes Trail Association, 2006).

Office Arrangement: Rainbow Routes Association has office space in the Sudbury Municipal office. In exchange for this, Rainbow Routes Association plans and develops trail infrastructure outside of the Trans Canada Trail in Sudbury on behalf of the City. These are the feeder trails for the Trans Canada Trail in Sudbury to the surrounding areas.

Human Resources: Rainbow Routes Association has two staff, one Executive Director and an intern through NOHFC who deliver the project. The organization has also received support through Human Resources and Skill Development Canada and their Job Creation Program. They can hire a crew of people and a supervisor for six weeks of the summer to do trail construction and maintenance. Currently, they have 18 staff working on the project in different capacities (McIntosh, 2006).

Funding: Rainbow Routes Association is funded through a variety of sources much like other trail groups. They receive funding from the Greater City of Sudbury as they have been very successful attracting matching funding for trail development, signage, marketing etc. They have received funding from Ontario Trillium Foundation, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, FedNor, Human Resources and Skills Development, Active2010 etc. (Rainbow Routes Trail Association, 2006). Rainbow Routes Association has been very successful in in-kind and donations for trail materials, amenities and other required support.

Equipment: Rainbow Routes Association has trail building equipment like an ATV and trailer, chainsaws, bush cutters, shovels, rakes etc. As they don't do trail maintenance, the City of Sudbury maintains the trails, Rainbow Routes Association doesn't have any trail maintenance equipment.

Sustainability Planning: Sustainability is an issue that has been discussed at the Rainbow Routes Association Board of Directors level but hasn't been acted upon yet. Currently, Rainbow Routes Association is in development mode. Once the trail is finished, then the mandate has been fulfilled and there is little reason to remain active. The City of Sudbury maintains the trail once built so there is not maintenance role. The logical role to move into would be trail based events, tourism and promotion. This would require a change in mandate and probably board turn over as the current board has been assembled for trail development (McIntosh, 2006).

Regional Trail Committees: The Rainbow Routes Association is an incorporated, not-for-profit organization governed by 40 group/individual volunteers. The board of directors (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, chair and vice-chair) employs an Executive Director. The organization embodies the spirit of community partnerships. With local trail groups, the cities and towns of the Regional Municipality of Sudbury, not-for-profit groups

and representatives from the education and private sectors, Rainbow Routes Association is fast becoming the central meeting place for outdoor enthusiasts (Rainbow Routes Trail Association, 2006). Rainbow Routes Association does have smaller local trail groups as partners in the greater project. In the past, Rainbow Routes Association has applied for funding through Northern Ontario Heritage Fund on behalf of some of these groups as they were either unincorporated or didn't have the capacity to write or deliver on a grant. Rainbow Routes Association also funnels the dollars from the City of Sudbury to these groups on a yearly basis (McIntosh, 2006).

Trail Development: Once Rainbow Routes Association was incorporated, they started working toward a master plan to create a conceptual route through the Sudbury region and link up to the Trans Canada Trail. This master plan was prepared and issued in August 2001. Rainbow Routes is the lead advocate in developing the Trans Canada Trail in Sudbury and is supported by the City of Greater Sudbury towards implementing it in the region. Once completed, Sudbury's portion of the Trans Canada Trail will be 133 km long and provide a continuous route for commuting along with recreational biking, hiking and skiing by linking the existing patchwork of recreational trails (Rainbow Routes Trail Association, 2006).

Issues and Lessons: Lessons that Rainbow Routes Association has for other groups is "don't take no as an answer". Their current Executive Director, Deb McIntosh says there is always a way around the obstacle and some times people say no because they don't want to deal with you right now". Rainbow Routes Association is also very skilled at being able to spin trails so it appeals to all, from the decision makers, to the funders to the local citizen who uses the trails. Rainbow Routes Association attributes being able to "spin" trails so they are attractive on many levels a major part of their overall success.

Required Support: Current issues that require support from the trail's community and government that are hindering trail development in the Greater Sudbury Region is legislation especially around the Line Fences Act and Occupiers Liability. If these two pieces of legislation were changed/modified to make trail development/management easier, then trail development would move along all the more smoother in Sudbury (McIntosh, 2006).



Appendix 7.2

Muskoka Trails Council

Mandate

To enhance the ability and enjoyment of trails and other related issues within the boundaries of the District Municipality of Muskoka by providing a central voice on behalf of residents and visitors alike, to municipalities within our District and other government agencies.

Mission Statement

Through trail development, and working cooperation with other community partners, the Muskoka Trails Council will promote healthy, active and safe lifestyles and contribute to building sustainable rural and urban communities throughout the district Municipality of Muskoka.

Vision

Trails are a vital component of transportation and recreation within Muskoka. Trails benefit residents and visitors alike and encourage healthy lifestyles and appreciation of the natural features of our District. The Muskoka Trails Council seeks to develop and sustain these benefits for generations to come.

Goals

- To foster the development of trails, both public and private in Muskoka.
- To promote the responsible use of trails within Muskoka.
- To create a sustainable cooperative partnership between various trails organizations and users.
- To advocate on behalf of an interconnecting trails system at district, provincial and national levels as appropriate.
- To foster a policy that supports the implementation of trails in areas of new development and redevelopment.
- To encourage and support creation of an Active Transportation Plan throughout the District.

Objectives

- Secure paid staff to undertake the goals and objectives of the Muskoka Trails Council.
- Create consistent trail inventory and mapping throughout the District of Muskoka.
- Develop and maintain a brochure to promote trails in Muskoka.
- Inform municipal, regional, provincial and federal politicians of the goals and objectives of the Muskoka Trails Council.
- Create public relations tools such as but not limited to:
 - Audio-visual presentation for public viewing.
 - Acquire and make use of display donated by Active Trails Muskoka.
 - Develop a plan for regularly informing the general public of events related to trails and to help garner public support for trail development in Muskoka.
 - Compile information on socio-economic impact of trails.
 - Develop an education plan for Muskoka Trails Council members and partners. e.g. work shops, speakers, education packages for schools etc.
 - Advocate the protection of public rights of way such as road allowances and shore road allowances for possible future trails and Active Transportation corridors.
 - Be alert for opportunities for further partnerships with the private sector such as Bed & Breakfast Association, Ecotourism provider's et al.

Other Roles

- Advocate for more paved shoulders on highways, District and area municipal properties.
- Be aware of and seek possible connections with future Georgian Bay coastal walking trails and trails in adjacent regions, such as Simcoe County, Haliburton and Parry Sound.

Membership

Each area municipality, the District Muskoka and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit are encouraged to appoint at least one member from their advisory committee responsible for trails and recreation issues within their municipality. Membership may also include a representative from regional user groups that have an interest in a specific type of trail use; e.g. snowmobiling, ATVs, horseback riding, canoeing, cross country skiing etc. Each trail use will have one representative only; thus regional groups will be given priority over local groups.

Administrative Structure

- The Muskoka Trails Council will consist of a general membership with an executive.
- Working subcommittees will be struck to represent various trail stakeholder interests. These committees will not be required to have permanent status but may be created or recalled as work is needed.
- Executive/board of directors will consist of a president/chair, vice president/vice chair, recording secretary, treasurer, chairs of subcommittees and x directors.
- Activities of the MTC will be governed by bylaws.
- Standard government rules of order will be used in the conducting of meetings.

(Muskoka Trails Council, 2006)



Appendix 7.3

Park-To-Park Trail Association Partnerships

The following is a list of partnerships from the Park-To-Park Trail Association and what the relationship entails.

10 Municipal Partners - All the municipalities provide funding for operations program and will provide capital resources (money, equipment or materials) for our next phase of development. Park-To-Park Trail has 10 municipal representatives who sit on the Board of Directors.

Ontario Trillium Foundation - Trillium has granted P2P \$103,100 for wages over three years to deliver the NOHFC program of capital development.

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) - The capital component of the project is funded by NOHFC. They have earmarked \$249,814.00 over three years for infrastructure, signage and amenities.

Environmental Community Opportunity (ECO) Pilot Project - A partnership with the Parry Sound Ministry of Natural Resources and Parry Sound District Social Services. Although funding for this partnership has ended, we have maintained the project with District Social Services. We have secured a workshop, transportation of crew members, tools and equipment, and wages for an ECO Crew Leader who oversees trail construction and maintenance.

Ministry of Natural Resources - MNR has provided access to tools, equipment, ATV's, snowmobiles and trailers, in addition to mapping and other planning resources. An MNR liaison/advisor also sits on the Park-To-Park Trail Board of Directors.

Ontario Parks - With Killbear and Algonquin as anchor parks that will connect 7 parks in total (The Massasauga, Oastler Lake, Arrowhead, Oxtongue River - Ragged Falls and Big East

River), Ontario Parks has provided lots of support to this project. This has included promotion in park tabloids, along with equipment and resources. We have an Ontario Parks representative sitting on our Steering Committee.

Friends of Killbear Provincial Park - This group has helped promote Park-To-Park Trail while raising funds for their own inter-park trail, which will provide a vital link into Killbear Park to improve roadway safety concerns.

Huntsville Parks & Trails Committee - We have overlapping representation for both groups as we share sections of trail with the Trans Canada Trail. We will be matching capital dollars spent on these sections of trail to ensure funds are spent efficiently.

Ducks Unlimited Canada - We have been working with Ducks Unlimited to establish an interpretive site at the Partridge Bay Wetland in Carling Township. This partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited and Ontario Parks will provide a trail access point with parking and signage. Ducks Unlimited will also be assisting us to produce wetland biographies this summer and will provide support for our Wood Duck Nesting Box fundraising campaign.

Parry Sound District Snowmobile Club - Since Park-To-Park Trail uses some OFSC trails, we work with the District clubs to cost-share similar projects. Projects we have identified that can be partnered are bridging, resurfacing and land securement. Park-To-Park Trail is in regular contact with this group to promote cooperation, resources sharing and capital funding.

Muskoka District Snowmobile Club - We will be working with this group the same way as we do with the Parry Sound District.

Georgian Bay Nordic Ski and Canoe Club - Future work will be done with the GBNSC to provide a link to Park-To-Park Trail in McDougall Township.

Parry Sound District ATV Club - We have a representative on our Board of Directors from this club and have worked on some events together.

Kearney ATV Club - To date, we have worked with the Almaguin Highlands' FedNor intern who has been hired to identify and promote trails for the Town of Kearney and to help establish a Kearney ATV Club. The ATV trails will be linked to the Park-To-Park Trail system.

Trans Canada Trail - Park-To-Park Trail manages 71kms of the TCT for the national body. The Park-To-Park Trail Project Coordinator sits on the Board for the Ontario division of the TCT.

Ontario Trails Council - Park-To-Park Trail works closely with the provincial body representing trails in Ontario.

Haliburton Highlands Trails and Tours Network - Partners for the purpose of sharing information, contacts and resources which will help us to learn from the experience of other groups.

West Parry Sound Museum - Partnership with the Museum will aid in the research of historical and cultural points of interest of the trail.

Georgian Bay Land Trust - Formed a partnership to network with other environmental groups. Will work together on land in common interest to create trail attractions on property they hold title.

Parry Sound Public Health Unit - Provided literature on healthy/active living for both the Trail Awareness Days and the Bicycle Safety Rodeos at Killbear and Arrowhead Provincial Parks.

Parry Sound and Huntsville Detachment OPP - Assisted with the Bicycle Safety Rodeo, providing information on Bicycle Helmet Safety and correct use of hand signals. They also assisted the children with the obstacle course.

State Farm Insurance - The sponsor for the Bicycle Safety Rodeo, State Farm Insurance provided an agent and necessary materials needed for the event. The event featured bicycle safety information, an obstacle course, inspection station and personalized bike licences for participating children.

(Park-To-Park Trail Association, 2003)

7.4 Trail Group Health Checklist

Measurable	Completed	Pending	Estimated Start Date	Future Plans / Notes
Incorporated				
Mandate				
Vision				
Mission Statement				
Current Budget				
3 Year Cash Flow Projection				
Business Plan				
Staff Full Time				
Staff Part Time				
Trails Master or Management Plan				
Accounts Policy				
Fundraising Plan				
Human Resources Policy				
Strategic Plan				
Marketing Plan				
Directors Handbook				
Board Biographies				
Connection Tree				
Loyalty, Duty & Conflict Policy				
Code of Conduct				
Overtime Agreements with Staff				
Staff Training & Development Plan				
Funding for Next Fiscal Year				
Board Training				

Trails Business Plan Template

1.0	Executive Summary		
	➤ Business Name	➤ Business License	➤ Overview
	➤ Business Address	➤ Incorporation	➤ Key Objectives
	➤ Telephone	➤ Office Location	➤ Mandate
	➤ Type of Business	➤ Trail Location	➤ Goals
2.0	Map of Project		
3.0	Board of Directors Structure		
	➤ Representatives	➤ Advisors	➤ Staff
4.0	Executive Organizational Chart		
	➤ Recruitment of Board Members	➤ Resignation of Staff	
	➤ Resignation of Board Members	➤ Communications Flow Chart	
	➤ Recruitment of Staff		
5.0	Partners		
6.0	Trends and Market - Benefits of Trails		
	➤ Social Benefits	➤ Environmental Benefits	
	➤ Economic Benefits	➤ Tangible Benefits (short and long-term)	
	➤ <i>Trail Specific</i> Economic Benefits	➤ Intangible Benefits	
7.0	Human Resources		
	➤ Employees (goals or targets)	➤ Job Creation (direct and indirect jobs)	
8.0	Economic Overview		
	➤ Annual Budget	➤ Cash Flow Analysis	
9.0	Sales and Marketing Plan		
	Promotion & Marketing		
	➤ Logo/Branding	➤ Public Presentations	➤ Regular Administration
	➤ Merchandise	➤ Multi Media/Interactive	➤ Communication
	➤ Printed Materials	➤ Vehicle	
	➤ Displays	➤ Media	
10.0	Operating Plan		
	➤ Administration	➤ Field Operations	
11.0	Planning for the Future		
	➤ Short Range Plans	➤ Long Range Plans	
12.0	Appendices		
	Administration		
	➤ Constitutional Bylaws	➤ Office Procedures	➤ Resolutions/Motions
	➤ Policies & Procedures	➤ Marketing Plan	➤ Fundraising Plan
	➤ Strategic Plan		
	Trail Management		
	➤ Trail Management /Master Plan	➤ Signage Policy	➤ Maintenance Strategy

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