



The Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan

**A Path Towards Healthy People
and Thriving Communities**

*Manitoba Natural Resources and Northern Development
2023*

Manitoba 

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Available in alternate formats upon request.



Treaty and Land Acknowledgement

Manitoba Natural Resources and Northern Development recognizes that Manitoba is on the Treaty Territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk peoples. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

We respect the spirit and intent of Treaties and Treaty Making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

With this Trails Strategy and Action Plan, we commit to:

- Learning more about and sharing information relating to the history and sacredness of lands and waters on which trails are located.
- Working with Indigenous Peoples and communities on trail planning, programming and other related initiatives.
- Helping and encouraging trail planners, managers and users to understand our shared responsibilities as both visitors to and caretakers of the land.



Introduction

In Manitoba and around the world, recreational trail use is growing in popularity, and this growth was highlighted in recent years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Trails are increasingly recognized for the benefits and value they provide, including for recreation and active transportation purposes, and the physical, mental, social and economic benefits their use generates. Where trail planning and management may once have been an afterthought, the value of a well managed and high-quality trails network is clear and intentional efforts are needed to leverage the benefits that trails provide.

There is a tremendous opportunity at hand to enhance our trail systems. Manitoba will continue to build a recognized, world class and sustainable provincial trail network that supports physical and mental health and well-being, as well as showcases and protects Manitoba's diverse and unique natural ecosystems. This strategy and action plan will encourage a high quality of life for Manitobans and offer visitors from near and far an exceptional experience touring all Manitoba has to offer.

The Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan is the guiding document that will inform the development, management and expansion of Manitoba's network of trails for today's users and future generations. This plan will:

- Improve connectivity and strengthen the trail network across Manitoba
- Support the protection, management and rehabilitation of natural environments where trails are located
- Foster collaboration between user groups while reducing potential conflicts
- Encourage growth in eco-tourism with the potential to generate economic benefits for communities large and small

Commitment to Engagement

The Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan was informed by the experience and expertise of many individuals and organizations, and a comprehensive research plan and engagement process. See Appendix A for details on the engagement process and some of the key partners that were involved.

Successfully realizing the vision, goals, actions and outcomes identified in this plan cannot be done by Government alone. It will require ongoing engagement, partnership, cooperation and participation from trail users, municipalities, Indigenous organizations and communities, dedicated trail stakeholder organizations, and local economic development and tourism stakeholders, many of whom are increasingly recognizing the value of trails.

A whole-of-government approach is also needed to ensure perspectives from across all areas are reflected. Although the development of the Trails Strategy and Action Plan is being led by Natural Resources and Northern Development, it has been informed by our partners in Environment and Climate, Health, Mental Health and Community Wellness, Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations, Transportation and Infrastructure, the Manitoba Accessibility Office, Municipal Relations, and Travel Manitoba.

The Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan will complement and act alongside a number of other provincial plans and strategies that have been prepared in recent years. See Appendix B for more details on these documents.



Manitoba's Trail Network

Trails across Manitoba are located on the Treaty Territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk peoples, as well as on the Homeland of the Red River Métis and on lands in northern Manitoba that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. Trail users are encouraged to learn more about the history of the land they travel and recreate on, and be aware of whose traditional territory they may be passing through. This information may be available on trail organization/manager websites, on maps or on signs, and Manitoba is seeking to increase its efforts to include these details on government publications. The Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan seeks to improve trail users' and managers' understanding of the need to consider Indigenous rights in the trail development process, and support communication and relationship-building between trail users, organizations and Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Manitoba has different types of recreational trails, with many active user groups involved with their use and management. Trails were often originally created for purposes relating to travel, hunting and/or gathering, and then later adopted for recreation. Long-standing trail activities include hiking and trail running, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. In recent years, the establishment of trails for mountain biking and ATV riding has also become more popular.

Manitoba's trail networks covers areas located on provincial Crown lands (like provincial parks, provincial forests, wildlife management areas and undesignated Crown lands) but also on federal lands (Riding Mountain National Park, in particular), private lands, municipal lands and First Nation or other Indigenous community lands. In many cases, trails were originally developed or cleared for non-recreational purposes, such as trapping or forestry.

What is a Trail?

The Manitoba Trails Strategy defines a trail as **a route on land or water used for recreation or active transportation**. Trails may be in an urban, rural, frontcountry or backcountry setting, such as parks and forests, gravel or paved pathways (including sidewalks), roadways, or rivers.

Types of trails include:

NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS, including those for walking, hiking, mountain biking, fat biking, horseback riding, skiing, etc.

MOTORIZED TRAILS, including those for snowmobiling and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riding. These may be designated for motorized use in all seasons or for motorized use in only part of the year, such as certain snowmobile trails that are only available for use in the winter.

MIXED-USE TRAILS can be any combination of the above.

WATER ROUTES, including for canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding, etc. Note: references here to water routes are generally focused on non-motorized activities on those routes.

BACKCOUNTRY TRAILS are remote, isolated or away from easily accessible areas. Backcountry trails may or may not be regularly maintained and may or may not include overnight camping.

FRONTCOUNTRY TRAILS are in outdoor areas that are easily accessible by vehicle and are characterized by a higher level of development.

WATER ROUTES are waterways, including lakes and rivers, which are used for recreational paddling or boating, and/or transportation. Water routes may consist only of flat water, or may contain moving water and rapids. People may travel on them for short distances or for longer distances, including portages.



Physical and mental health benefits

extend to all forms of recreational trail use. For example, off-road vehicle riding, which some may not view as being a particularly arduous activity, has been shown to provide benefits for health and physical fitness and is considered to provide a moderate-intensity physical challenge comparable to activities such as golf or rock climbing (Burr, Jamie, et al. 2010).

Manitoba's extensive network of trails cannot be developed, maintained and managed by government alone. There are many organizations that Manitoba has entered into agreements with to do this important work. The involvement of these organizations, like Trails Manitoba, The Snowmobilers of Manitoba Inc.(Snoman), The All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba (ATVMB), the Cross-Country Ski Association of Manitoba, affiliates of the Manitoba Horse Council, and the Manitoba Mountain Biking Association, will be essential in the successful implementation of this Trails Strategy and Action Plan. Manitoba also recognizes the local and regional groups who support this work. These groups, most if not all of which rely on the work of volunteers, are vital to the existence of Manitoba's trail networks, and this Trails Strategy and Action Plan is intended to help sustain their work into the future.

Benefits of Trails

Numerous studies have been conducted to identify the benefits of both non-motorized and motorized trails for human health and well-being. These benefits are recognized as impacting individuals, communities and society as a whole in a number of different ways including physical and mental health, economic development and environmental protection.

Physical and Mental Health Benefit

Research has shown that access to trails is connected to increased physical activity, improvements to mental and physical health, and a long-term decrease in chronic illnesses, which in turn leads to reduced health care costs and fewer accidents (Clarke and Nair, 2020). A national Léger survey commissioned by Trans Canada Trail found that 95 per cent of Canadians were using trails to enhance their mental health (Trans Canada Trail, 2020). Manitoba's strategy for improving mental health (the VIRGO Report: Improving Access and Coordination of Mental Health and Addictions Services: A Provincial Strategy for all Manitobans) notes the importance of access to recreational opportunities in general as a social determinant of health. Trails in urban environments provide people in those areas with access to nature and opportunities for outdoor education. Green exercise (being physically active within a natural environment) has also been shown to play a role in supporting well-being (Rogerson et al., 2020), and many people who responded to a public engagement survey for the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan commented on the importance of trails for their health and quality of life. It is important to also consider the value of the trail environment and users' surroundings. The benefits of using trails are derived not only through participating in a particular activity or reaching a destination, but also through the experience of being out on the trail and what is seen along the way.

Economic Benefit

The economic benefits of trail development and related spin offs have also been studied, especially in relation to cycling. In Quebec, which has a well developed and popular cycling network known as La Route Verte, cycling and bicycle-related tourism generate \$1.2 billion in spending every year, which creates a high volume of jobs as well as a significant amount of tax revenue. La Route Verte is a huge tourism draw for Quebec, with total annual tourism spending by cyclists, who spend more than the average leisure traveller, amounting to nearly \$700 million (Vélo Québec , 2016). Other trail-based activities also generate economic benefits in a number of categories, including spending on gear, equipment and off-road vehicles, spending on travel to access trails, job creation and tax revenue. For example, The Northern Manitoba Snowmobile Tourism Strategic Plan 2019-2023 identified the economic impact of snowmobiling in Canada to be \$8 billion, with 2013 data from the Snowmobilers of Manitoba Inc. (Snoman) indicating that snowmobiling had over a \$300 million impact on the Manitoba economy (Western Management Consultants, 2019). Similarly, a study conducted by the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council estimated recreational ATV riding generates between \$230M and \$250M in economic expenditures in the province (Smith Gunther Associates Ltd. 2016). The existence of nearby trails has also been shown to have a positive impact on property values (Clarke and Nair, 2020).

Environmental and Green Benefit

Well-designed and well-managed trails can have a positive impact on the environment. Trails can provide beneficial functions like stormwater retention, flood control and carbon retention, and they increase public support for the preservation of natural areas and wildlife habitat. The use of trails as active transportation routes also has clear benefits for the environment including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, in air, water and noise pollution, and in energy consumption. Carefully planned and managed trails are critical to avoid any unintended impacts to the environment including facilitating the spread of invasive species or affecting wildlife movement patterns or behaviour.



The Epinette Creek Trail System

in Spruce Woods Provincial Park in Western Manitoba is popular for hiking and trail running, as well as biking and skiing. These trails take visitors over varying terrain following the Epinette Creek, through wooded areas and ravines, sandy hills and mixed-grass prairie. Visitors can choose shorter loop segments or travel the whole trail system, which has a total return trip distance of 41.7 km. Backcountry camping is available at the far end of the route or, in winter, visitors can book an overnight stay at the Jackfish Cabin.



Vision

Manitoba will offer a sustainable and high quality network of trails for all user types and abilities that will support happy, healthy and informed trail users, a strong network of trail organizations, and economic and quality of life benefits for Manitoba communities.

Pillars and Expected Outcomes

1 *Partnerships and Collaboration*

- Improved communications across the trails sector
- Reduced conflict between trail users
- Enhanced information and education opportunities for trail users
- Encouragement of new users of trails who have historically faced barriers to participation

2 *Development and Maintenance*

- Enhanced information and data about existing trails and trail uses
- Improved processes for the development of trails on Crown lands
- Improved trail connectivity across the province
- More opportunities created for high demand trail activities
- Economic benefits for communities
- Increased availability of trails-related amenities
- Enhanced trail maintenance and clean up

3 *Long-Term Sustainability*

- Enhanced financial sustainability for the ongoing operations of Manitoba's trail networks
- Environmental benefits, with environmental integrity ensured
- Enhanced retention and recruitment of volunteers
- Improved enforcement of unauthorized activities on trails, and unauthorized trail development activities

4 *Trail Tourism and Promotion*

- Enhanced promotion and marketing to local, national and international visitors
- Increased trail-based tourism and economic development opportunities
- Enhanced highway and wayfinding signage
- Improved access and availability of trails-related information

Guiding Principles



Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan

Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision

The vision for this Trails Strategy and Action Plan is:

Manitoba will offer a sustainable and high quality network of trails for all user types and abilities that will support happy, healthy and informed trail users, a strong network of trail organizations, and economic and quality of life benefits for Manitoba communities.

This vision strikes a balance between the need and desire for more recreational trail development and use, the needs of other land and resource users, and maintaining ecological integrity.

Guiding Principles

- **Accessibility** – A variety of trails are available in different areas of Manitoba for those with diverse needs or the requirement of mobility aids.
- **Collaboration and Partnership** – The Manitoba government, trail organizations, Indigenous communities, municipalities and other interested parties work together in collaboration and partnership to enhance Manitoba's trail network.
- **Equity** – All users have access to safe recreational trails in proximity to their community.
- **Healthy People and Communities** – Diverse, varied and safe trail opportunities provide physical, mental, social and economic benefits to Manitobans and their communities, improving quality of life.
- **Inclusion** – All Manitobans and visitors to Manitoba are welcome on all trails suitable for their skill or experience level, and are encouraged to learn more about trails and participate in related programming and events.
- **Quality** – **Trail managers**, including the government, trail organizations and communities, strive to provide high quality trails that meet the needs of their intended users, including multi-use trails that can accommodate a range of interests, as well as single-use trails that are specifically designed and maintained for particular activities.
- **Respect for Others** – Trail users respect others on the trail, respect the work of trail managers, and learn about the lands and waters on which they are travelling to gain an understanding of the traditional Indigenous territories on which many trails are located.
- **Respect for the Environment** – Trail users, developers and managers are good stewards of the trail, and are considerate of ecological integrity and environmental conservation.
- **Sustainability** – Trails are developed and managed in a way that ensures the long-term sustainability of trail organizations, volunteers and the environment within which trails are located.
- **Tourism and Economic Development** – Trails are promoted as tourism destinations for Manitoba residents and visitors, and trails and related amenities are developed and managed to create high quality attractions that generate economic benefits for Manitoba communities.



The term "trail manager" is used periodically throughout this document, and is referring to any government department or agency, municipality, Indigenous community, or non-government organization responsible on some level for trail management and/or maintenance. It is intended to be a catchall term, and is not referring to any official position or title.

The Four Pillars of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan

At a September 2020 workshop with representatives of trail stakeholder organizations, participants were asked to identify the essential cornerstones around which the Trails Strategy could be built. Based on the responses from participants as well as other feedback, four pillars and areas of focus were identified for the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan:

1. Partnerships and Collaboration
2. Development and Maintenance
3. Long-Term Sustainability
4. Trail Tourism and Promotion

Partnerships and Collaboration

This first pillar of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan reflects the need to ensure that all parties with some level of interest in recreational trails have a voice and are engaged in trails-related communications, planning and/or programming, including various government departments and agencies, municipalities, Indigenous communities, trail user groups, the public, and numerous other organizations and businesses. A regular theme in the discussions held regarding the Trails Strategy, and in input received, is that improved communication, and more partnership and collaboration, between trail organizations and the provincial government would be beneficial to all.

Expected outcomes from actions under this pillar will include:

- Improved communications across the trails sector
- Reduced conflict between trail users
- Enhanced information and education opportunities for trail users
- Encouragement of new users of trails who have historically faced barriers to participation





The Mantario Hiking Trail

is located in Whiteshell Provincial Park in Eastern Manitoba and is very popular with experienced backcountry hiking enthusiasts. At 60 km long between the south and north trailheads, this challenging trail is the longest trail of its type in the Canadian Shield in Western Canada. While visitors typically traverse the trail over multiple days, it has also become popular for experienced trail runners seeking to do all or a portion of the trail in a shorter timeframe.

Goals and Actions for Pillar 1: Partnerships and Collaboration

GOAL: *To improve communication between all parties involved in recreational trail development and management in Manitoba, and facilitate effective working relationships and decision-making.*

ACTIONS:

- Create one point-of-contact within the provincial government with a new Trails Coordination Office.
- Establish a Provincial Trails Expert Advisory Body composed of the Provincial Trails Coordination Office and trail organizations with province-wide mandates.
- Establish an Interdepartmental Trails Committee within government to ensure a whole-of-government approach to trails management.
- Seek opportunities for co-development with Indigenous communities and/or organizations on trails-related initiatives and programs.
- Identify partnership opportunities between trail organizations, resource tourism operators and/or businesses that provide services to trail users.

GOAL: *To mitigate and prevent conflicts arising between different trail uses and activities.*

ACTIONS:

- Reduce conflicts between different user groups and conflicts resulting from incompatible uses of land by pursuing the following initiatives:
 - Ensure clarity of the appropriate uses of individual trails where needed through signage and other communications strategies to reduce potential for conflict.
 - Work with provincial and regional ATV groups toward the designation of sanctioned ATV trails, to encourage ATV riders to use designated trails and reduce incidences of ATV riders using trails intended for non-motorized activities.
 - Create opportunities for groups to meet to discuss trails and be collaborative including trail clean-up days or other social trails-related activities, to bring different user groups together where the general public is invited.
 - Incorporate and share with trail planners best practices on how to design multi-use trails to reduce or avoid conflicts in trail planning.
 - Include information in any educational and promotional materials, as well as on trail signage, about when and where non-recreational trail uses occur (i.e. resource extraction and harvesting).
 - Increase communication efforts to inform trail users when trails or sections of trails are closed or re-routed due to resource-use activities or other factors.
 - Investigate the use of trail conflict management strategies that have been successful in other jurisdictions at key locations, such as the use of trailhead hosts, installation of cameras at trailheads, etc.

GOAL: *To inform current and potential trail users about trail-related subjects, support educational programming and training related to trail use, and foster a culture of trail stewardship in the public.*

ACTION:

- Develop a Trails Education and Stewardship Campaign.
- Create awareness of opportunities for participation in local area trail-related groups.

GOAL: *To identify and reduce barriers to trail access and use resulting from physical, social, economic or other factors.*

ACTION:

- Explore and support programming ideas and opportunities to introduce new users to trails.
- Improve access to trails and trails-related equipment for individuals or groups who may face associated barriers, such as through low-cost or free equipment rental/borrowing programs.
- Partner with organizations that work to promote and increase diversity, equity and inclusion in outdoor recreation and trails.



The Northgate Trails

are a 26 km system of stacked loop, multi-use trails for mountain biking, hiking and trail running. The main trailhead is on the border of Riding Mountain National Park, near the City of Dauphin in Western Manitoba. The trails are managed by the Dauphin Derailleurs Cycle Club and located on a mix of private and city land.

2 Development and Maintenance

The second pillar of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan is focused on trail development and maintenance, the designation of trails for particular uses or activities, trail-related amenities or facilities, and connectivity. Although there is demand for more trails to be developed, there must be a balance between developing new trails and maintaining, improving and fully realizing the value of existing ones. The significant variation in trail types, attributes and intended uses also means that what is appropriate design and planning, or issue resolution, for one trail may not be suitable for another. Long-term planning helps to ensure the sustainability of existing trails, while also accounting for potential future trail development or expansion into new areas. Consideration of trail systems and Active Transportation opportunities is also increasingly recognized as being important in community planning processes.

Formal trail designation can have an impact on existing trail and area uses, including established local and/or traditional activities, particularly if the new designation is associated with any use restrictions or fees. It is important to acknowledge these factors will continue to be given consideration as part of Crown land trail proposal review processes in the future, including the potential need for Indigenous consultation when new trail development is proposed.

Expected outcomes from actions under this pillar will include:

- Enhanced information and data about existing trails and trail uses, including recreational as well as resource-based uses
- Improved processes for the development of trails on Crown lands (including provincial parks, provincial forests, wildlife management areas, etc.), and understanding of associated requirements for trail proponents
- Improved trail connectivity across the province for enhanced safety and better experiences
- More opportunities created for high demand trail activities and overnight and backcountry trail experiences, balanced against the need to avoid overuse of certain areas and environmental degradation
- Economic benefits for small communities due to improvements to local trail networks
- Increased availability of trails-related amenities such as signage, washrooms, and staging and parking areas
- Enhanced trail maintenance and clean up



Trail organizations working toward the designation or development of new trails (or trail sections) are required to engage with potentially interested Indigenous communities, as well as the public and area stakeholders. This engagement is an ongoing process to build relationships and to discuss opportunities and concerns. Crown-Indigenous consultation is different, and refers to a specific process undertaken by the Crown which focuses specifically on potential impacts to Aboriginal and treaty rights. The duty to consult is a Crown obligation. Trail development proponents do not have a legal duty to consult but they may be expected to participate in the Crown-Indigenous consultation process, when required in relation to trail development proposals.

Goals and Actions for Pillar 2: Development and Maintenance

GOAL: *To collect detailed information on trails and related features or amenities and ensure this information is kept up to date.*

ACTIONS:

- Develop a Trails Database with up-to-date information on Manitoba trails, including spatial data, trail features, associated amenities or facilities, and current state.
- Encourage regular assessments of trail conditions by trail managers and seek user feedback regarding trail conditions and needs.
- Facilitate increased monitoring and maintenance of certain high-use backcountry routes.

GOAL: *To increase the collection of trails-related data and research.*

ACTIONS:

- Collect data on recreational trail use, and the economic, health and environmental benefits of trails, and analyze the value and impacts (including positive and negative) of trail-based recreation to surrounding communities, the environment and the province as a whole.
- Increase the use of **trail counters** and monitors, and document trail use patterns, with support from non-government agencies.
- Explore the adoption of new data collection methods as they are developed, such as camera technology to track speeds and modes of transport on Active Transportation routes.
- Monitor trail user experience and satisfaction over time, through surveys or other methods.
- Utilize market research to gain a better understanding of the market demand for particular types of trails and/or trail-based experiences.
- Seek out partnerships with universities or other organizations to facilitate trail research and data collection, and analyze information about who is using trails to consider questions regarding equitable access to trails and socioeconomic or other barriers.
- Expand the collection of Active Transportation user data to more locations across Manitoba.



Benefits of using trail counters:

- Provides data
- Supports funding/grant applications
- Helps to plan and target maintenance and prioritize work and projects
- Maps use and flow of the trail system
- Identifies trails at risk due to overloading, wet conditions, etc.
- Helps to gauge demand for parking
- Quantifies growth in usage
- Captures daily, weekly and seasonal trends

GOAL: *To improve and streamline the trail development application and review process for recreational trails on provincial Crown lands, including a reduction in regulatory barriers where possible.*

ACTIONS:

- Prepare a Trail Proposal Application Guide to provide applicants with information on the requirements and timelines involved with the application process for the development of new trails on Crown lands as well as for requests to designate existing trails for particular activities.
- Work with trail development proponents to help improve their understanding of the importance of Indigenous consultation and/or engagement in trail development and designation processes, and ensure related requirements are being met if not exceeded.
- Develop a comprehensive whole-of-government electronic application form and permit for Crown land trail proposals to reduce duplication and simplify the process for applicants.
- Utilize robust trail proposal review processes and criteria to ensure consistency in decision-making.
- Seek opportunities to reduce regulatory barriers to trail development by examining existing trails-related legislation and identifying aspects for modernization or improvement.



The Designated Provincial Snowmobile Trails

in Manitoba are managed, controlled and maintained by the Snowmobilers of Manitoba Inc., known as Snoman, under the terms of an agreement between Snoman and the Province of Manitoba. There are over 12,000 km of trails in the designated snowmobile trail network, with 53 Snoman member clubs responsible for maintaining and grooming the trails outside of provincial parks. Users must purchase a Snopass in order to ride on the trails.



Image courtesy of Travel Manitoba

GOAL: *To encourage and support partnerships in order to facilitate trail development and maintenance by non-government organizations.*

ACTIONS:

- Pursue amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act and/or the creation of regulations under the Act to reflect the growth in trail organizations over the past several years.
- Identify amenities that have the potential to improve the experience at existing trails and seek funding and/or partnership opportunities to develop these items.
- Work in partnership with Snoman to implement the Snopass system, and explore options for improving convenience for customers and growing sales numbers..
- Encourage partnerships and communication between municipalities or their recreation departments and local trail associations.

GOAL: *To ensure that trail managers are meeting obligations related to trail maintenance, safety and respect for the environment, and following recognized standards for trail development and maintenance.*

ACTIONS:

- Ensure trail associations, including their member clubs, are adhering to the requirements and conditions of their agreements and permits for trail use and maintenance, and following provincial guidelines applicable to their activities.
- Improve consistency regarding the use of agreements and permits with trail organizations, and identify trail organization activities that should be formalized via agreement where one is not in place.

GOAL: *To improve the connectivity of trails province-wide, and identify mechanisms to ensure long-term access to trails and incorporation of trail-related considerations in other planning processes.*

ACTIONS:

- Conduct an assessment of gaps in Manitoba's trail network and identify potential priority areas for new trail or activity opportunities that would facilitate increased connectivity.
- Seek opportunities for the province, municipalities, Indigenous communities and trail organizations to work together to improve trail connectivity, including partnerships to connect urban and rural areas by both motorized and non-motorized means.
- Continue to develop and maintain Manitoba's section of the Trans Canada Trail, in cooperation with trail steward groups across the province.
- Improve snowmobile route connections between northern and southern Manitoba.
- Work towards the identification of a provincial bicycle-touring network with Winnipeg as the hub, suitable for varying ages and abilities and branded as a recreational tourism opportunity for both Manitoba residents and tourists.
- Investigate the creation of a new type of easement to ensure long-term access to trails on private lands (where the landholder is willing) and prevent disruptions to trail connectivity.
- Identify other potential mechanisms that may be created to provide incentives for private landowners to allow use of their lands for trails.
- Ensure trails-related considerations are incorporated in transportation infrastructure planning, by improving communication between trail planners and transportation systems managers/planners, and supporting improved signage in highway right-of-ways.
- Engage with municipalities and private landowners about incorporating Active Transportation and trail systems into Land Use Planning documents and subdivision proposals.
- Examine the potential for new or expanded Active Transportation routes or trail systems as part of the interdepartmental review process for development plan and zoning by-law reviews.



The Grass River Canoe Route

in northern Manitoba is a route that was travelled by Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years. It then became part of the "upper track" trade route between Cumberland House and York Factory during the fur trade era. Paddlers today commonly start their journey at Cranberry Portage, west of Grass River Provincial Park, and can choose to end at Wekusko Falls, or travel further to Pisew Falls or Paint Lake provincial parks. Depending on the route selected, this is typically a one to two-week journey, with multiple portages.





The Souris River Bend Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Trail Network

includes multiple equestrian trail loops that pass through rolling mixed-grass prairie and riparian forests in southwestern Manitoba. The designated trail system in the WMA is currently under review, but currently the loops range from 6 to 22 km long. The WMA protects essential habitat for neo-tropical and grassland birds.

GOAL: To provide a high quality provincial trail network that offers a variety of experiences for users of different abilities or interests.

ACTIONS:

- Identify trails suitable for modification or improvement in order to be made more accessible, with consideration given to different levels of accessibility.
- Evaluate existing long-distance and overnight backcountry routes and identify opportunities for the designation of new routes.
- Adopt standards for trail development and maintenance where possible/practical, and identify best practices for the management of trails on or adjacent to agricultural and private lands.
- Increase awareness of the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces among trail developers and managers once the standard is finalized.
- Continually seek to reduce risks and safety concerns associated with pedestrian and cyclist use of roadways, by:
 - locating new trails or pathways adjacent to but separate from roadways as much as possible;
 - redirecting pedestrians and cyclists away from primary routes to secondary and tertiary (i.e. lower-speed) routes; and
 - identifying priority areas where the development of crossings on or over roadways and waterways is required.
- Align trails signage and wayfinding across the Province to improve quality and consistency, considering both highway/roadway signage as well as signage on trails and at trailheads.
- In cooperation with local Indigenous communities, area stakeholders and trail users, prepare individual trails plans for specific provincial parks with significant amounts of trail use and/or complex trails-related issues.
- Develop management guidelines and/or policy to address the rising use of electric motor devices (such as e-bikes, e-scooters, etc.) on trails.



What does improving trail accessibility mean?

When some people think of an accessible trail, they may think this can only mean a flat, paved trail. Today, however, improving trail accessibility, or making a trail more inclusive, can mean a range of things. The accessibility of a trail can be considered on different levels or scales, recognizing that people with different needs also seek different levels of difficulty challenge, or risk. The question of whether or not a trail is accessible does not have a “yes” or “no” answer; rather, the answer depends on what an individual’s abilities are, and what experience they are seeking.



The Duff Roblin Parkway Trail

is a 41 km long trail that was constructed as part of the Red River Floodway expansion project. The trail supports multi-use, non-motorized, four-season recreational opportunities along the floodway including walking, hiking and biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. There are multiple access points to the trail, but the south end of the trail is located in Duff Roblin Provincial Park, south of Winnipeg, and the north end connects to the Birds Hill Provincial Park trail network.



3 Long-Term Sustainability

The third pillar of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan involves the sustainability of Manitoba's trails including financial sustainability, environmental sustainability, and the sustainability of the people who do the work to manage and maintain trails. Key in this pillar is providing adequate support for a high quality trail network, while ensuring that consideration is given to environmental stewardship and protection of sensitive ecosystems and wildlife.

Expected outcomes from actions under this pillar will include:

- Enhanced financial sustainability for the ongoing operations of Manitoba's trail networks
- Environmental integrity is ensured by addressing concerns around the use and development of both motorized and non-motorized trails
- Environmental benefits resulting from rehabilitated lands and increased support for nature conservation
- Enhanced retention and recruitment of volunteers to support trail organizations and clubs
- Improved enforcement of unauthorized activities on trails, and unauthorized trail development activities

Goals and Actions for Pillar 3: Long-Term Sustainability

GOAL: *To take advantage of existing trail funding mechanisms to improve and support trails managed by non-government trail organizations, Indigenous communities, municipalities, and the provincial government.*

ACTIONS:

- Direct funding from The Provincial Parks Endowment Fund toward trail development, maintenance and management across Manitoba.
- Create a catalogue of other trail funding sources that are available to trail associations and clubs.
- Manitoba will work with Snoman and The All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba on the creation and implementation of a new funding structure for off-road vehicle organizations and trails.

GOAL: *To enable trail users and supporters to contribute financially to trails and trail organizations.*

ACTIONS:

- Encourage investment in trails by the public and private sector, by enabling opportunities for sponsorship of trails-related amenities (such as benches and warming shelters). Guidelines will be developed to manage such sponsorships for trails on Crown lands.
- Provide and promote opportunities for the general public, as well as private businesses, to make financial donations to the endowment fund noted above, and/or to individual trail associations.



The Brokenhead Wetland Interpretive Trail

is a wheelchair accessible trail located 80 km north of Winnipeg. The trail, including a lengthy boardwalk section, is 3.7 km return, and is located adjacent to the Brokenhead Wetland Ecological Reserve. The trail is managed by Debwendon Inc., a non-profit charity formed in 2007 to promote and preserve the Brokenhead Wetland Ecological Reserve and raise public awareness of the historic cultural connection between the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and the Brokenhead Wetland.





In winter, the Spruce Trail and Group use 1 road in Birds Hill Provincial Park, north of Winnipeg, provide opportunities for skijoring, in which the skier is connected to a dog wearing a harness, as well as skate skiing and kick sledding. The Group Use Road trail is 7.1 km and the Spruce Trail is 10.5 km return. The Spruce Trail also permits dog sledding in winter, and equestrian and hiking use in the other seasons.



GOAL: *To ensure that environmental considerations continue to be an important factor in the review process for trails on Crown land, and that trail development, maintenance and use are conducted with proper consideration of ecological values and integrity.*

ACTIONS:

- Seek to maintain a balance between the improvement of existing trails and the development of new trails, with recognition that it may not be desirable to improve certain trails for increased recreational access if they are currently used primarily for hunting and trapping.
- Encourage multi-use trails for compatible activities, to reduce separate linear features, avoid parallel trail developments, minimize fragmentation and edge effects, and reduce potential disturbance or impacts to the environment.
- Formalize and communicate policies regarding the development and designation of different types of trails on Crown lands included in Manitoba's network of protected and conserved areas.
- Where required, develop water crossings so as to not impact water flow or quality.
- Seek opportunities to locate cleaning stations for footwear, bicycles and off-road vehicles at trailheads and staging areas to reduce the potential for the spread of invasive species.
- Include environmental considerations in trails-related educational and promotional materials.



Areas reported in Manitoba's network of protected and conserved areas are areas where the conservation of biodiversity must take precedence. Proposals for the development of new trails in these areas must be assessed in this context and only approved if it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts to biodiversity. This is consistent with the guidance provided by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature for protected and conserved areas and the Pan-Canadian Decision Support Tool.



GOAL: *To facilitate greater accountability on the part of trail users and managers, and identify mechanisms to facilitate enforcement of and/or create deterrents to prevent unauthorized trail activities and developments.*

ACTIONS:

- Review provisions guiding enforcement of unauthorized trail use or activities on Crown lands.
- Explore options for establishing trail and land rehabilitation requirements.
- Consider potential mechanisms to prohibit vehicle use on trails that are designated as non-motorized and/or implement restrictions on equipment on certain trails to reduce damage to the trail surface.

GOAL: *To recognize the contributions of existing trail volunteers and increase opportunities for people to get involved with trail volunteer activities.*

ACTIONS:

- Encourage and facilitate volunteer opportunities by increasing awareness of existing opportunities and making it easier for individuals to get involved with local trail associations and clubs.
- Consider creating “Trail Ambassador” and/or “Adopt a Trail” programs, in which people can apply to be an ambassador for or “adopt” a particular trail.
- Investigate the potential creation of a trails-related volunteer awards or acknowledgement program.
- Feature volunteers at work on trails-related social media accounts.
- Engage with organizations that support trail maintenance training opportunities and skills development.



The Eastman and Woodridge Sandhogs ATV trails

are adjacent ATV trail networks located in southeast Manitoba. Together, the trail loops total 127 km. The trails are located primarily on Crown lands and managed by clubs affiliated with ATVMB.



4 Trail Tourism and Promotion

The fourth pillar of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan is focused on the sharing of trails-related information for Manitoba residents as well as visitors to the province, and improving the quality of Manitoba's trail network from a tourism perspective, including related marketing activities. Tourism-related infrastructure for Manitoba trails is underdeveloped and under promoted, despite existing strengths of the trail network and opportunities for growth in this area. There is also evidence that nature-based activities will be a key element to tourism strategies and the Provincial economy going forward. Research suggests there is increasing value in promoting trail usage by both Manitoba residents and tourists (Clarke and Nair, 2020).

Expected outcomes from actions under this pillar will include:

- Enhanced promotion and marketing to local, national and international visitors of market-ready trails with high potential to attract users
- Increased trail-based tourism revenue on provincial and local levels
- Economic development opportunities for small towns and local businesses
- Enhanced highway and wayfinding signage
- Improved access and availability of trails-related information for visitors, including a stronger, higher quality online resource

Goals and Actions for Pillar 4: Trail Tourism and Promotion

GOAL: *To support and encourage trail-related tourism across Manitoba, and grow a reputation for Manitoba as a trail tourism destination.*

ACTIONS:

- Celebrate “Manitoba Trails Day” annually on the first Saturday in June.
- Develop a “Signature Trails” program, with a goal of having at least one trail in each of the primary recreational trail activity categories to be designated as a “Signature Trail” (hike, bike, ski, horse, snowmobile, ATV, canoe, birding and/or wildlife viewing).
- Increase awareness of Manitoba's portion of the Trans Canada Trail, and encourage the creation of more trail tourism opportunities along the route.
- Identify market-ready and near market-ready trail experiences across the province. “Market-ready” trail experiences are defined as those that meet particular criteria, that are ready for visitation, and that can be marketed to travelers to Manitoba.

GOAL: *To facilitate the creation of partnerships that will increase the effectiveness of trail promotions and related initiatives.*

ACTION:

- Encourage trail managers to partner with Travel Manitoba and with each other on marketing strategies and promotions.

GOAL: *To provide more information about Manitoba's trails that is accurate and up to date, meets the needs of residents, visitors and trail managers, is easy to locate, and is available in multiple formats.*

ACTIONS:

- Create a "one-stop-shop" high quality trails website with information for both trail users and trail associations.
- Ensure that trails-related promotional materials and route maps are available at accommodations facilities across Manitoba.

GOAL: *To make use of technological advancements in trail mapping and related resources in order to improve the experience for Manitoba trail users.*

ACTION:

- Investigate options for the most effective way to provide information on Manitoba trails via a mobile app.



**The Camp Morton
Provincial Park Ski Trails**

in Manitoba's Interlake provide 12.4 km of ski trails for all experience levels, from novice to advanced. This system includes several loop trails, with skiers able to travel through the forest or ski with a view of Lake Winnipeg in winter. These trails are groomed by the Gimli Cross-country Ski Club.

Implementation and Evaluation of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan

Implementation

Implementation of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan will require a joint effort by many different individuals and organizations. The implementation process will be led collaboratively by the new Provincial Trails Coordination Office and the Provincial Trails Expert Advisory Body, both established through this strategy. Opportunities to co-develop aspects of the strategy with Indigenous partners and communities will also be prioritized.

The starting dates for implementation of the actions outlined in this document will vary, with some actions to be initiated immediately, and others requiring more consideration and planning prior to implementation. The anticipated timeline for implementation is illustrated in Appendix C. The immediate priorities are:

1. Create the Provincial Trails Coordination Office within the department of Natural Resources and Northern Development.
2. Establish the Provincial Trails Expert Advisory Body.
 - Terms of Reference to be prepared immediately to identify group composition, scope of activities and meetings, roles, and other relevant details.
 - Members will be identified and the first meeting of the group convened to launch implementation of the Trails Strategy and Action Plan.
3. Establish the Interdepartmental Trails Committee.

The Provincial Trails Coordination Office will be responsible for developing a more detailed implementation schedule for the trails strategy and action plan, in cooperation with both the Provincial Trails Expert Advisory Body and the Interdepartmental Trails Committee. This schedule will outline the sequence in which the various strategy actions will be initiated, and further define responsibilities and timelines for implementation and/or completion.

Evaluation

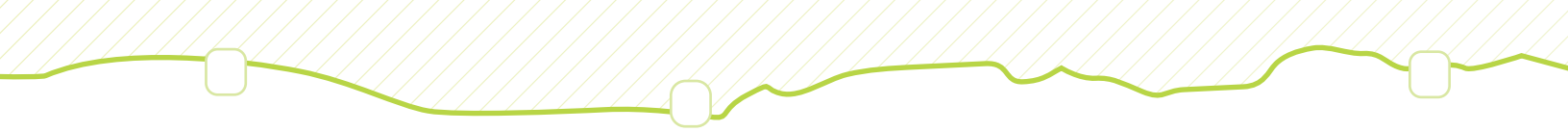
With support from the Provincial Trails Coordination Office, the Provincial Trails Expert Advisory Body will monitor the ongoing implementation of the trails strategy and action plan, and conduct a formal evaluation every three to five years, submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development. These review processes will provide the opportunity to identify successes and challenges, as well as consider current priorities or issues as Manitoba's provincial trail network evolves.

Conclusion

The Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan was prepared with input from many different individuals and organizations. The wide range of thoughtful and considered comments provided were a critical component of this process, and Manitoba government appreciates the time given and interest shown by all contributors. Manitobans have demonstrated they are incredibly passionate about trails, and this high level of interest continues to grow across the province. The future of trails in Manitoba is bright.

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Appendix A - Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan Engagement Process

The *Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan* was informed by a comprehensive research plan and engagement process. Manitoba Parks and Trails engaged with and invited comment from many different stakeholder groups, community representatives, Indigenous organizations and the public to provide perspectives, observations and experiences. Engagement activities included:

- Meetings and discussions with individuals and with representatives of various trail associations and other organizations. These were conducted in person, virtually, over the phone, and via email.
- An online survey for trail groups and builders sent directly to roughly 70 individuals or organizations, with the invitation to share the survey with organization clubs or Board members as appropriate (August-September 2020; 80 responses received).
- A full-day workshop with 15 representatives of trail associations, government departments/agencies and other trails-related organizations (September 2020).
- Invitations to provide input sent to approximately 200 trail associations, resource-based organizations, Indigenous organizations, and a variety of other potentially interested parties.
- An online survey hosted on EngageMB for the public (December 2020 – January 2021; 2,022 responses received).
- A public webinar (January 2021; 150+ viewers).
- Comments submitted via email.

A summary of the feedback received through this engagement process is available in the [Manitoba Trails Strategy What We Heard Report](#). The input received through this process is reflected in this strategy and action plan, and supports the advancement of shared public priorities. In general, there is considerable consensus among stakeholders regarding what the trail-related opportunities are in Manitoba.

The Manitoba government appreciates the time and input provided by the many individuals and organizations who contributed to the development of the Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan. These contributions illustrated a wide range of perspectives, including those of recreational trail users, resource users, Indigenous communities and others. Special thanks are given to the following organizations, who participated in the workshop noted above and/or provided feedback on an early draft version of the strategy:

- Trails Manitoba
- The Cross Country Ski Association of Manitoba
- The Snowmobilers of Manitoba Inc.
- The All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba
- The Manitoba Mountain Biking Association
- Winnipeg Trails Association
- The Manitoba Horse Council and The Distance Riders of Manitoba
- The Association of Manitoba Municipalities
- Recreation Manitoba
- Parks Canada / Riding Mountain National Park

Appendix B - Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan Integration with Other Plans

The Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan will complement and act alongside a number of other provincial plans and strategies that have been prepared in recent years. These include:

- [Look North: Report and Action Plan for Manitoba's Northern Economy \(2017\)](#)
 - Particularly relevant is the potential for increased Indigenous engagement and partnerships in relation to trail development and trail tourism opportunities.
- [Northern Manitoba Tourism Strategy: 2017-2022](#)
 - Northern Manitoba is recognized as having untapped potential for outdoor adventure tourism, including river canoe and kayak experiences, wildlife and nature walking tours, wilderness camping, and ecotourism adventures.
- [Manitoba Climate and Green Plan 2017](#)
- [Manitoba Indigenous Tourism Strategy 2019-2022](#)
- [Northern Manitoba Snowmobile Tourism Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#)
 - This Strategic Plan has a vision for a high quality, integrated and fully connected snowmobile trail system, with “bucket list” trails sought after by worldwide markets.
 - Aspects of the Strategic Plan overlap with issues and opportunities discussed in relation to the Trails Strategy. These include the need for nodal areas to provide high quality services (fuel, food, accommodation, etc.), the value of interpretation of historic places of interest along trails, the need for support for volunteer trail clubs, and the importance of high quality signage, maps, shelters and other measures to address safety concerns associated with remote, long-distance routes.
 - The Strategic Plan also notes the need to work with Indigenous communities to plan snowmobile trails, so that these communities can benefit from snowmobile tourism while ensuring that resource-based activities such as trapping are respected.
- [Provincial Tourism Strategy](#)
 - Compared to other jurisdictions, the travel trade scores Manitoba highly on land-based and water-based outdoor recreation and parks. Winter and water-based experiences are noted as having potential to generate significant new visitation to Manitoba.
 - Investment in enhanced tourism/wayfinding standards and signage is considered to be important to success. Increased transportation and access options including bicycle rentals, bicycle lanes, walking paths and public access to rivers and lakes should also be pursued.

Appendix C - Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan Implementation Timeline

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: <i>Initiate</i> 2023	Upcoming: <i>Initiate</i> 2024	Future: <i>Initiate</i> 2025 and beyond
PILLAR 1: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION			
GOAL: To improve communication between all parties involved in recreational trail development and management in Manitoba, and facilitate effective working relationships and decision-making.			
Create one point-of-contact within the provincial government with a new Trails Coordination Office.	✓		
Establish a Provincial Trails Expert Advisory Body composed of the Provincial Trails Coordination Office and trail organizations with province-wide mandates.	✓		
Establish an Interdepartmental Trails Committee within government to ensure a whole-of-government approach to trails management.	✓		
Seek opportunities for co-development with Indigenous communities and/or organizations on trails-related initiatives and programs.		✓	
Identify partnership opportunities between trail organizations, resource tourism operators and/or businesses that provide services to trail users.		✓	
GOAL: To mitigate and prevent conflicts arising between different trail uses and activities.			
Ensure clarity of the appropriate uses of individual trails where needed through signage and other communications strategies to reduce potential for conflict.	✓		
Work with provincial and regional ATV groups toward the designation of sanctioned ATV trails, to encourage ATV riders to use designated trails and reduce incidences of ATV riders using trails intended for non-motorized activities.	✓		
Create opportunities for groups to meet to discuss trails and be collaborative including trail clean-up days or other social trails-related activities, to bring different user groups together where the general public is invited.		✓	
Incorporate and share with trail planners best practices on how to design multi-use trails to reduce or avoid conflicts in trail planning.		✓	
Include information in any educational and promotional materials, as well as on trail signage, about when and where non-recreational trail uses occur (i.e. resource extraction and harvesting).	✓		

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: Initiate 2023	Upcoming: Initiate 2024	Future: Initiate 2025 and beyond
Increase communication efforts to inform trail users when trails or sections of trails are closed or re-routed due to resource-use activities or other factors.	✓		
Investigate the use of trail conflict management strategies that have been successful in other jurisdictions at key locations, such as the use of trailhead hosts, installation of cameras at trailheads, etc.		✓	
GOAL: To inform current and potential trail users about a variety of trail-related subjects, support educational programming and training related to trail use, and foster a culture of trail stewardship in the public.			
Develop a Trails Education and Stewardship Campaign.		✓	
Create awareness of opportunities for participation in local area trail-related groups.		✓	
GOAL: To identify and reduce barriers to trail access and use resulting from physical, social, economic or other factors.			
Explore and support programming ideas and opportunities to introduce new users to trails.		✓	
Improve access to trails and trails-related equipment for individuals or groups who may face associated barriers, such as through low-cost or free equipment rental/ borrowing programs.		✓	
Partner with organizations that work to promote and increase diversity, equity and inclusion in outdoor recreation and trails.		✓	
PILLAR 2: DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE			
GOAL: To collect detailed information on trails and related features or amenities and ensure this information is kept up to date.			
Develop a Trails Database with up-to-date information on Manitoba trails, including spatial data, trail features, associated amenities or facilities, and current state.		✓	
Encourage regular assessments of trail conditions by trail managers and seek user feedback regarding trail conditions and needs.			✓
Facilitate increased monitoring and maintenance of certain high-use backcountry routes.		✓	

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: <i>Initiate 2023</i>	Upcoming: <i>Initiate 2024</i>	Future: <i>Initiate 2025 and beyond</i>
GOAL: To increase the collection of trails-related data and research.			
Collect data on recreational trail use, and the economic, health and environmental benefits of trails, and analyze the value and impacts (including positive and negative) of trail-based recreation to surrounding communities, the environment and the province as a whole.			✓
Increase the use of trail counters and monitors, and document trail use patterns, with support from non-government agencies.		✓	
Explore the adoption of new data collection methods as they are developed, such as camera technology to track speeds and modes of transport on Active Transportation routes.			✓
Monitor trail user experience and satisfaction over time, through surveys or other methods.			✓
Utilize market research to gain a better understanding of the market demand for particular types of trails and/or trail-based experiences.			✓
Seek out partnerships with universities or other organizations to facilitate trail research and data collection, and analyze information about who is using trails to consider questions regarding equitable access to trails and socioeconomic or other barriers.		✓	
Expand the collection of Active Transportation user data to more locations across Manitoba.		✓	
GOAL: To improve and streamline the trail development application and review process for recreational trails on provincial Crown lands, including a reduction in regulatory barriers where possible.			
Prepare a Trail Proposal Application Guide to provide applicants with information on the requirements and timelines involved with the application process for the development of new trails on Crown lands as well as for requests to designate existing trails for particular activities.		✓	
Work with trail development proponents to help improve their understanding of the importance of Indigenous consultation and/or engagement in trail development and designation processes, and ensure related requirements are being met if not exceeded.	✓		
Develop a comprehensive whole-of-government electronic application form and permit for Crown land trail proposals to reduce duplication and simplify the process for applicants.		✓	
Ensure robust trail proposal review process and criteria to ensure consistency in decision-making.		✓	
Seek opportunities to reduce regulatory barriers to trail development by examining existing trails-related legislation and identifying aspects for modernization or improvement.			✓

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: Initiate 2023	Upcoming: Initiate 2024	Future: Initiate 2025 and beyond
GOAL: To encourage and support partnerships in order to facilitate trail development and maintenance by non-government organizations.			
Pursue amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act and/or the creation of regulations under the Act to reflect the growth in trail organizations over the past several years.			✓
Identify amenities that have the potential to improve the experience at existing trails and seek funding and/or partnership opportunities to develop these items.		✓	
Work in partnership with Snoman to implement the Snopass system, and explore options for improving convenience for customers and growing sales numbers.	✓		
Encourage partnerships and communication between municipalities or their recreation departments and local trail associations.		✓	
GOAL: To ensure that trail managers are meeting obligations related to trail maintenance, safety and respect for the environment, and following recognized standards for trail development and maintenance.			
Ensure trail associations, including their member clubs, are adhering to the requirements and conditions of their agreements and permits for trail use and maintenance, and following provincial guidelines applicable to their activities.	✓		
Improve consistency regarding the use of agreements and permits with trail organizations, and identify trail organization activities that should be formalized via agreement where one is not in place.		✓	
GOAL: To improve the connectivity of trails province-wide, and identify mechanisms to ensure long-term access to trails and incorporation of trail-related considerations in other planning processes.			
Conduct an assessment of gaps in Manitoba's trail network and identify potential priority areas for new trail or activity opportunities that would facilitate increased connectivity.		✓	
Seek opportunities for the province, municipalities, Indigenous communities and trail organizations to work together to improve trail connectivity, including partnerships to connect urban and rural areas by both motorized and non-motorized means.		✓	
Continue to develop and maintain Manitoba's section of the Trans Canada Trail, in cooperation with trail steward groups across the province.	✓		
Improve snowmobile route connections between northern and southern Manitoba.		✓	
Work towards the identification of a provincial bicycle-touring network with Winnipeg as the hub, suitable for varying ages and abilities and branded as a recreational tourism opportunity for both Manitoba residents and tourists.		✓	

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: <i>Initiate</i> 2023	Upcoming: <i>Initiate</i> 2024	Future: <i>Initiate</i> 2025 and beyond
Investigate the creation of a new type of easement to ensure long-term access to trails on private lands (where the landholder is willing) and prevent disruptions to trail connectivity.			✓
Identify other potential mechanisms that may be created to provide incentives for private landowners to allow use of their lands for trails.			✓
Ensure trails-related considerations are incorporated in transportation infrastructure planning, by improving communication between trail planners and transportation systems managers/planners, and supporting improved signage in highway right-of-ways.	✓		
Engage with municipalities and private landowners about incorporating Active Transportation and trail systems into Land Use Planning documents and subdivision proposals.		✓	
Examine the potential for new or expanded Active Transportation routes or trail systems as part of the interdepartmental review process for development plan and zoning by-law reviews.		✓	
GOAL: To provide a high quality provincial trail network that offers a variety of experiences for users of different abilities or interests.			
Identify trails suitable for modification or improvement in order to be made more accessible, with consideration given to different levels of accessibility.		✓	
Evaluate existing long-distance and overnight backcountry routes and identify opportunities for the designation of new routes.	✓		
Adopt standards for trail development and maintenance where possible/practical, and identify best practices for the management of trails on or adjacent to agricultural and private lands.		✓	
Increase awareness of the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces among trail developers and managers once the standard is finalized.		✓	
Continually seek to reduce risks and safety concerns associated with pedestrian and cyclist use of roadways, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locating new trails or pathways adjacent to but separate from roadways as much as possible; • redirecting pedestrians and cyclists away from primary routes to secondary and tertiary (i.e. lower-speed) routes; and • identifying priority areas where the development of crossings on or over roadways and waterways is required. 			✓

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: Initiate 2023	Upcoming: Initiate 2024	Future: Initiate 2025 and beyond
Align trails signage and wayfinding across the Province to improve quality and consistency, considering both highway/roadway signage as well as signage on trails and at trailheads.		✓	
In cooperation with local Indigenous communities, area stakeholders and trail users, prepare individual trails plans for specific provincial parks with significant amounts of trail use and/or complex trails-related issues.		✓	
Develop management guidelines and/or policy to address the rising use of electric motor devices (such as e-bikes, e-scooters, etc.) on trails.	✓		
PILLAR 3: LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY			
GOAL: To take advantage of existing trail funding mechanisms to improve and support trails managed by non-government trail organizations, Indigenous communities, municipalities, and the provincial government.			
Direct funding from The Provincial Parks Endowment Fund toward trail development, maintenance and management across Manitoba.		✓	
Create a catalogue of other trail funding sources that are available to trail associations and clubs.		✓	
Manitoba will work with Snoman and The All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba on the creation and implementation of a new funding structure for off-road vehicle organizations and trails.	✓		
GOAL: To enable trail users and supporters to contribute financially to trails and trail organizations.			
Encourage investment in trails by the public and private sector, by enabling opportunities for sponsorship of trails-related amenities (such as benches and warming shelters). Guidelines will be developed to manage such sponsorships for trails on Crown lands.		✓	
Provide and promote opportunities for the general public, as well as private businesses, to make financial donations to the endowment fund noted above, and/or to individual trail associations.		✓	

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: <i>Initiate</i> 2023	Upcoming: <i>Initiate</i> 2024	Future: <i>Initiate</i> 2025 and beyond
GOAL: To ensure that environmental considerations continue to be an important factor in the review process for trails on Crown land, and that trail development, maintenance and use are conducted with proper consideration of ecological values and integrity.			
Seek to maintain a balance between the improvement of existing trails and the development of new trails, with recognition that it may not be desirable to improve certain trails for increased recreational access if they are currently used primarily for hunting and trapping.	✓		
Encourage multi-use trails for compatible activities, to reduce separate linear features, avoid parallel trail developments, minimize fragmentation and edge effects, and reduce potential disturbance or impacts to the environment.	✓		
Formalize and communicate policies regarding the development and designation of different types of trails on Crown lands included in Manitoba's network of protected and conserved areas.		✓	
Where required, develop water crossings so as to not impact water flow or quality.	✓		
Seek opportunities to locate cleaning stations for footwear, bicycles and off-road vehicles at trailheads and staging areas to reduce the potential for the spread of invasive species.		✓	
Include environmental considerations in trails-related educational and promotional materials.	✓		
GOAL: To facilitate greater accountability on the part of trail users and managers, and identify mechanisms to facilitate enforcement of and/or create deterrents to prevent unauthorized trail activities and developments.			
Review provisions guiding enforcement of unauthorized trail use or activities on Crown lands.		✓	
Explore options for establishing trail and land rehabilitation requirements.		✓	
Consider potential mechanisms to prohibit vehicle use on trails that are designated as non-motorized and/or implement restrictions on equipment on certain trails to reduce damage to the trail surface.			✓

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: <i>Initiate</i> 2023	Upcoming: <i>Initiate</i> 2024	Future: <i>Initiate</i> 2025 and beyond
GOAL: To recognize the contributions of existing trail volunteers and increase opportunities for people to get involved with trail volunteer activities.			
Encourage and facilitate volunteer opportunities by increasing awareness of existing opportunities and making it easier for individuals to get involved with local trail associations and clubs.		✓	
Consider creating “Trail Ambassador” and/or “Adopt a Trail” programs, in which people can apply to be an ambassador for or “adopt” a particular trail.		✓	
Investigate the potential creation of a trails-related volunteer awards or acknowledgement program.		✓	
Feature volunteers at work on trails-related social media accounts.	✓		
Engage with organizations that support trail maintenance training opportunities and skills development.		✓	
PILLAR 4: TRAIL TOURISM AND PROMOTION			
GOAL: To support and encourage trail-related tourism across Manitoba, and grow a reputation for Manitoba as a trail tourism destination.			
Celebrate “Manitoba Trails Day” annually on the first Saturday in June.		✓	
Develop a “Signature Trails” program, with a goal of having at least one trail in each of the primary recreational trail activity categories to be designated as a “Signature Trail” (hike, bike, ski, horse, snowmobile, ATV, canoe, birding and/or wildlife viewing).		✓	
Increase awareness of Manitoba’s portion of the Trans Canada Trail, and encourage the creation of more trail tourism opportunities along the route.		✓	
Identify market-ready and near market-ready trail experiences across the province. “Market-ready” trail experiences are defined as those that meet particular criteria, that are ready for visitation, and that can be marketed to travelers to Manitoba.		✓	

Manitoba Trails Strategy and Action Plan	Immediate: <i>Initiate</i> 2023	Upcoming: <i>Initiate</i> 2024	Future: <i>Initiate</i> 2025 and beyond
GOAL: To facilitate the creation of partnerships that will increase the effectiveness of trail promotions and related initiatives.			
Encourage trail managers to partner with Travel Manitoba and with each other on marketing strategies and promotions.	✓		
GOAL: To provide more information about Manitoba’s trails that is accurate and up to date, meets the needs of residents, visitors and trail managers, is easy to locate, and is available in multiple formats.			
Create a “one-stop-shop” high quality trails website with information for both trail users and trail associations.		✓	
Ensure that trails-related promotional materials and route maps are available at accommodations facilities across Manitoba.		✓	
GOAL: To make use of technological advancements in trail mapping and related resources in order to improve the experience for Manitoba trail users.			
Investigate options for the most effective way to provide information on Manitoba trails via a mobile app.			✓