

BGTN

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES • BRUCE-GREY TRAILS NETWORK

Trail Building Tool Kit

LAST UPDATED JULY 2003

4: DEALING WITH RISK MANAGEMENT



ALL PHOTOS EXCEPT BIKE BY ALLISON KENNEDY



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Dealing with Risk Management

“Risk management is the process used to minimize the adverse effect of accidents”²

In an effort to reduce hazards on the trail, reduce lawsuits and claims, and to make trails as safe as possible for all involved, risk management procedures are practiced and should be considered a top priority by all trail organizations and managers. Risk management covers an extensive area including insurance, safety, education, and trail inspections. In Ontario, trail organizations/managers are faced with the possibility of potential lawsuits for personal injuries or damages that occur on the trail or lands adjacent to the trail. With a proper Risk Management Plan in place, a trail organization/manager can effectively create a safe trail environment by following and practicing modern trail designs and standards, installing proper signage, and regulating maintenance on the trails before any trail related injuries occur. Addressing these concerns from the beginning of trail development may also help to resolve conflicts with landowners.

4.1 KEY ELEMENTS OF A RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Development of a policy statement to deal with risk management
2. Trail built and maintained to a standard
3. Monitoring of trail conditions/ document and file
4. Trail repairs made promptly
5. Hazards marked, trail re-routed or closed
6. Training of staff, trail workers and other volunteers
7. Waivers of liability and acceptance of risk /signage
8. Accident and incident reports
9. Land use agreements with owners
10. Insurance

4.2 SAMPLE TRAIL INSPECTION REPORT

The sample report shown on page 11 was made by using the *Appalachian Mountain Club Volunteer Maintenance Work Trip Report* as a reference.³ Please refer to the Trespass to Property Act and Occupiers Liability Act as additional information.

4.3 STEPS IN THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS⁴

Refer to the report by Ian Attridge, Barrister and Solicitor, *Risk Management for Trails* for more information on the Risk Management Process.

1. Risk Identification
2. Risk Evaluation
3. Risk Treatment Measures
4. Implementation

It is important to note that trail organizations and groups should work together with their insurance company to ensure adequate risk management procedures are in place before any development of trail occurs. Contact the Ontario Trails Council or your Regional Trail Association for more information regarding insurance and liability issues.



TRAIL INSPECTION REPORT

Date of Inspection _____ Time of Inspection _____

Trail Inspector Name(s) and Title _____

Trail or Trail Section _____

Trail Appearance

Note condition of trail. Is it adequate to trail standards? If no, explain.

Hazards

List hazards and potential hazards below. If repairable, note the time, location, what maintenance actions were taken to correct the problem(s).

If one or more of the hazards are not repairable, example missing sign, list below what materials, actions and size of work party needed for follow up maintenance.

Maintenance

List any basic maintenance work accomplished and at what section. Example, clearing brush, picking up litter.

Has any follow up maintenance/repairs from previous trail inspections been corrected? If yes, what was corrected and what actions were taken?

Are any other areas of concern observed? Example: Trespassing onto landowner property, trail section to be re-routed?

Additional Comments

Upon completion of Trail Inspection, please hand report in to the Trail Coordinator for review.

Source: Appalachian Mountain Club Volunteer Maintenance Work Trip Report



Recommended Reading

Bruce Grey Trail Network Master Plan Design Brief. ESG International. 2000.

Design, Signage and Maintenance Guidelines, Waterfront Trail. Waterfront Regeneration Trust. 1997, PDF document available at www.waterfronttrail.org.

Guide for Trail Workers Third Edition, The Bruce Trail Association, 2001.

Insurance Review, Understanding and dealing with the challenges of insuring trails in Ontario. Doug Wyseman for the Ontario Trails Council.

Occupiers' Liability Act, R/S.O. 1990, c.0.2, PDF document available at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.

Risk Management Manual, Hike Ontario. November 2002. PDF document available at www.hikeontario.com

Trail Building and Maintenance. Appalachian Mountain Club, 1981.

Trail Liability and Other Reforms in Ontario: A Discussion Paper. Ian Attridge for the Haliburton Highlands Stewardship Council. October 2002.

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² Doug Wyseman. *Insurance Review, Understanding and dealing with the challenges of insuring trails in Ontario*. Ontario Trails Council.

³ *Trail Building and Maintenance*. 1981. Appalachian Mountain Club and National Parks Service.

⁴ *Risk Management for Trails*. Ian Attridge, Barrister and Solicitor.

