
TRAIL MAINTENANCE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

To describe the trails to be maintained within the District boundaries and the level of maintenance to which they are to be sustained at.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to Council, District administration, trail users, trail stewards, and the public.

3. DEFINITIONS

“accessible trail” means a trail that complies with accessibility guidelines and can be used by persons in wheelchairs.

“Council” means the Council of the District.

“cycling” or **“mountain biking”** includes the use of any non-motorized built bicycle and e-bikes (Class 1 only – Class 2 and 3 e-bikes are prohibited except where motorized traffic is permitted).

“decommission” means a process of reclaiming an entire trail or sections of a trail within District boundaries so that it is returned to a natural state without causing negative environmental impacts such as erosion.

“difficulty rating” means a rating system used to categorize the technical difficulty of trails ranging in difficulty from easy (green circle) to extreme (double black diamond).

“District” means the Corporation of the District of North Cowichan.

“District trail” means any trail designated in the Priority Trail Inventory.

“double-track” means a trail where users generally travel single file but have the ability to pass each other while travelling in the opposing or same direction.

“machine-built” means constructed with the use of an excavator, dozer, ditch witch, or other similar machine.

“Manager” means the Director of Parks and Recreation for the District or his/her approved designate.

“North Cowichan Trail Standards” means the standards for trail construction, maintenance, signage and inspection adopted by the District.

“Policy” means this Trail Maintenance Policy.

“Priority Trails Inventory” means the inventory of District trails and corresponding priority levels attached as Appendix A to this Policy.

“remediation” means a process of restoring a trail or any large impacted areas of a trail due to the impact of various environmental hazards or trail design issues.

“single-track” means a trail:

- a) where users must travel in single file;
- b) that tends to wind around obstacles such as rocks and trees rather than having the obstacles removed, allowing the trail to blend into the environment; and
- c) where no motorized use is permitted.

“surfaced” means a trail with imported material on the tread surface such as pavement, gravel, mulch or other durable material.

“trail steward” means an organization or individual that:

- a) formally takes on responsibility for the care and maintenance of a particular trail or trail network; and
- b) is generally a volunteer organization whose stewardship is authorized through a memorandum of understanding or maintenance agreement.

“Trail Stewards List” means the list of trail stewards for the District attached as Appendix C to this Policy.

“tread width” means the measured width of a trail surface upon which users travel.

“Technical Trail Feature” means an obstacle on a mountain bike trail designed to challenge the skill of mountain bike users that can be natural (e.g., rock face or slab) or man-made (e.g., ramps, bridges, or teeter totters). Bridges constructed to cross streams, gullies or protect the environment will not be considered a Technical Trail Feature, unless features are added onto them (i.e. bumps).

“unauthorized trail” means any new trail constructed within District limits that is constructed without proper authority or approval.

“unsurfaced” means a trail where the tread is made up of soils and materials naturally found where the trail is located.

4. POLICY

4.1 Residents of North Cowichan hold the trail network in very high regard and are committed to its preservation, use and enjoyment. It is felt that the trail network reflects the District’s unique valley and mountain setting. The trail network is enjoyed by both residents and visitors. North Cowichan citizens envision a District trail system in which all take pride, and every citizen assumes responsibility for its protection.

4.2 There are hundreds of kilometres of mapped trails within the Municipality of North Cowichan boundaries. The District is responsible for the maintenance of specific trails that meet established criteria. The level of service for identified trails is determined using a system of prioritization. This maintenance responsibility includes, but is not limited to, scheduled inspections, clearing, remediation, re-routing, decommissioning and issue tracking. The District will provide this service

on a priority basis in a cost-effective manner, with consideration to safety, budgets, personnel, and environmental concerns.

4.3 The Policy specifically excludes the following:

- a) Trails not identified in the Priority Trails Inventory;
- b) Sidewalks and public rights-of-way;
- c) District parks and District playgrounds; and
- d) Greenbelts and/or environmental protection areas.

5. OBJECTIVES

5.1 The objectives of this Policy are to create appropriate high quality trails within the community and provide equal opportunities for all residents to access a public trail close to their neighbourhoods. This will be achieved by:

- a) Providing an annotated list of priority trails that is reviewed on a periodic basis by Council;
- b) Assigning appropriate levels of service to District trails;
- c) Describing and scheduling specific tasks associated with designated service levels;
- d) Maintaining high safety standards on the trails;
- e) Protecting natural resources within the immediate vicinity of the trails;
- f) Providing high quality user experiences;
- g) Providing a framework to facilitate the effective allocation of available resources to maintain the North Cowichan Trail Standards; and
- h) Facilitating citizen participation in accessing the user experience on trails.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Council shall:

- a) Annually set and adopt the trail maintenance budgets;
- b) Set and adopt the levels of service on a periodic basis;
- c) Set and adopt the Priority Trails Inventory on a periodic basis; and
- d) Authorize any permanent trail closures.

6.2 District Administration (Parks and Recreation Department)

The Manager shall ensure the implementation of this Policy by:

- a) Determining when and how to initiate and perform trail maintenance activities;
- b) Allocating and scheduling park and trail resources;
- c) Obtaining, allocating and scheduling privately held resources;
- d) Addressing public concerns and public safety issues;
- e) Managing the budget; and
- f) Recommending revisions to the Policy as required.

6.3 The Manager shall have authority to:

- a) amend the Priority Trails Inventory as required to reflect changes such as newly authorized trails and trails or sections of trails that have been temporarily closed or decommissioned in the interests of public safety or the protection of the environment; and

- b) amend the Trail Stewards List as necessary to reflect any changes or additions.
- 6.4 District Parks and Recreation Department employees shall carry out trail maintenance in accordance with this Policy, the approved budget, and the instructions of the Manager.
- 6.5 Private Contractors
 - Where not-for-profit organizations assume the primary maintenance role on identified trails, the organization shall:
 - a) Perform duties consistent with the established 'level of service' assigned to each trail;
 - b) Work within guidelines established by the North Cowichan Trail Standards; and
 - c) Report maintenance plans and activities to the Manager on April 1 and October 1 of each year.

7. TRAIL TYPES

This classification system is adapted from the Whistler Trail Standards (first edition). Classification systems may be modified when the Resort Municipality of Whistler updates their trail standards.

- 7.1 There are five general types of District trails. Type I trails have the highest amount of traffic with multiple users and Type IV trails have the least amount of traffic with specific users.

7.1.1 Type I Trails

Type I Trails are double-track trails with a compacted gravel surface, paved with asphalt or chip sealed. Typical use includes pedestrian and cycling.

Type I Trails:

- a) Are within the District core and connecting neighbourhoods;
- b) Provide a two to three metre tread width;
- c) Provide a clear height to three metres;
- d) Have trailhead signage and enroute signage installed where appropriate;
- e) Have difficulty and distance markers installed where appropriate;
- f) Have interpretive signage installed at established points of interest where appropriate;
- g) Have benches and viewing platforms installed where appropriate; and
- h) May provide lighting for night-time use if appropriate.

7.1.2 Type II Trails

Type II Trails are surfaced single-track or double-track trails. Typical use includes pedestrian, cycling and equine.

Type II Trails:

- a) Have a single-track tread width up to one metre;
- b) Have a double-track tread width up to three metres;
- c) Provide a clear height to 2.4 metres;

- d) Are machine-built;
- e) Have boardwalks and bridges installed if appropriate;
- f) Have embedded trail obstacles removed;
- g) Have trailhead signage and enroute signage installed where appropriate;
- h) Have difficulty and distance markers installed where appropriate;
- i) Have interpretive signage installed at established points of interest where appropriate;
- j) Have benches and viewing platforms installed where appropriate; and
- k) The typical difficulty rating is easy (green circle).

7.1.3 Type III Trails

Type III Trails are unsurfaced single-track. Typical use includes hiking and mountain biking.

Type III trails:

- a) Have a single-track tread width of 50 to 70 centimetres;
- b) Provide a clear height to 2.4 metres;
- c) May be machine built;
- d) Have trailhead signage and enroute signage installed where appropriate;
- e) Have difficulty and distance markers installed where appropriate; and
- f) Have difficulty rating ranges from easy (green circle) to extreme (double black diamond).

7.1.4 Type IV Trails

Type IV Trails are unsurfaced single-track trails. Typical use includes hiking and mountain biking.

Type IV Trails:

- a) Plan for a tread width between 30 to 50 centimetres on native soil;
- b) Provide a clear height to 2.4 metres;
- c) Are hand built;
- d) Have minimal trailhead and enroute signage installed;
- e) Have terrain that is sometimes rough with minimal tree grubbing and soil removed;
- f) Has no high impact users such as horses; and
- g) Have difficulty rating ranges from moderate (blue square) to extreme (double black diamond).

7.1.5 Type V Trails

Type V Trails are wilderness trails. Typical use includes hiking and mountain biking.

Type V Trails:

- a) Are planned as low-impact nature trails;
- b) Plan for a tread width between 30 to 50 centimeters on native soil;

- c) Provide a clear height to 2.4 metres;
- d) Are hand built;
- e) Have minimal trailhead and enroute signage installed;
- f) Have terrain that is sometimes extremely rough with minimal tree grubbing and soil removed;
- g) Have no high impact users such as horses;
- h) In case of low-impact use boardwalks to traverse sensitive areas; and
- i) Have difficulty rating ranges from moderate (blue square) to extreme (double black diamond).

8. TRAIL PRIORITIES

8.1 In assigning a level of priority to trails, consideration is given to criteria such as:

- a) Location;
- b) Level of use by both residents and non-residents;
- c) Recreation needs;
- d) The nature of the facilities;
- e) The funds budgeted for trail maintenance;
- f) Personnel;
- g) Resources; and
- h) Environmental impact.

8.2 The District has set four priority ratings for trail maintenance, as outlined in this section and assigned to each District trail in the Priority Trails Inventory:

8.2.1 Priority A: This priority level may be applied to trails that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Type I trails;
- Trails with Technical Trail Features;
- Accessible trails; and
- Trails that are used as alternative transportation routes connecting neighbourhoods and the downtown core.

8.2.2 Priority B: This priority level may be applied to trails that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Type II or Type III trails;
- Trails that receive moderate levels or intensity of use;
- Trails that include built structures and/or features;
- Seasonal trails;
- Trails that are maintained by the District on behalf of other landowners as specified in an agreement; and
- Trails that are currently maintained by not-for-profit organizations where the District and the organization either have or do not have a trail user agreement in place.

8.2.3 Priority C: This priority level may be applied to trails that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Type III or Type IV Trails;
- Trails that do not include built structures and/or features; and
- Trails that receive low levels or intensity of use.

8.2.4 Priority D: This priority level may be applied to trails that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Type II, III, IV or Type V Trails;
- Key trails that are located in areas for which trail planning and official designations have not occurred; and
- Wilderness trails that are not part of an organized network with established trailheads and signage.

8.3 The District will not be required to maintain any trail not identified in the Priority Trails Inventory.

8.4 As part of the annual budget review process, the Manager shall make recommendations to Council regarding the appropriate priority and service levels for any new trails that have been proposed.

9. MAINTENANCE LEVEL OF SERVICE

9.1 Maintenance and operations of District trails are under the general responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department, with most forest reserve recreational trail duties performed by trail stewards.

9.2 Trail inspections, where identified, include a review of the trail for overall safety and difficulty designation, signage review, and review of constructed features. All issues observed will be logged and work orders created as appropriate.

9.3 Priority A Trails

Priority A Trails will be inspected twice per year (March and October).

- Public complaints are logged and work orders created if appropriate.
- Winter maintenance will be as per the District's Snow Policy.
- Work will be completed based on budget and resources available.

9.4 Priority B Trails

Priority B Trails will be inspected once per year at the beginning or end of the use season (March or October).

- All issues observed are logged and work orders created if appropriate.
- Public complaints are tracked and work orders created if appropriate.
- Work will be completed based on budget and resources available.
- If the District is not the primary organization responsible for maintaining the trail, the identified trail steward will complete inspections, document required maintenance and issues, and coordinate resulting trail work.
- The District will support identified trail stewards with user agreements in place to complete maintenance and improvements if human and financial resources are available.

9.5 Priority C Trails

Priority C Trails will be inspected once every two or three years at the beginning or end of the use season (April or October).

- a) Public complaints are tracked and work orders created if appropriate.
- b) Work will be completed based on budget and resources available.
- c) If the District is not the primary organization responsible for maintaining the trail, the identified trail steward will complete inspections, document required maintenance and issues, and coordinate resulting trail work.
- d) The District will support identified trail stewards with user agreements in place to complete maintenance and improvements if human and financial resources are available.

9.6 Priority D Trails

Priority D Trails are not inspected.

- a) Public complaints will be documented and shared with identified trail stewards.
- b) Work will be completed based on budget and resources available.

10. ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE

10.1 Trails may require additional maintenance if one or more of the following occurs:

- a) Deterioration of constructed features or Technical Trail Features.
- b) Erosion or excessive soil loss due to insufficient drainage.
- c) Trail widening or braiding.
- d) Ruts or vegetation cover loss.
- e) Incidents such as flooding, wind-fall trees, etc.

10.2 Work will be completed based on available resources, budgets, and priorities.

11. REPAIR OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY VANDALISM

11.1 Repair of damage caused by vandalism to trails, trailheads, and signage is carried out in order to maintain an aesthetic level consistent with the trail priority level, to maintain trails and features, to minimize recurrence, and to ensure public safety.

11.2 Public complaints are received and logged. Data is used to schedule maintenance, capital upgrades, and replacement.

11.3 Repair of damage caused by vandalism is undertaken year round.

12. CONDITIONS FOR TRAIL CLOSURES

12.1 District trails or sections of District trails that pose a significant risk to public safety and/or the environment may be temporarily closed under the authority of the Manager while the issue is resolved through clean up, maintenance, and/or re-routing.

- 12.2 In the event that risks to public safety or the environment cannot be resolved through clean up or maintenance, the Manager may decommission District trails or sections of District trails as deemed necessary. However, any decommissioning of whole District trails shall be subject to confirmation by resolution of District Council.
- 12.3 At any time as deemed necessary, the Manager may temporarily close any trail or portion thereof to public use, including adjacent public open space.
- 12.4 Upon discovery, unauthorized trails will be closed under the authority of the Manager to allow for investigation and review.
- 12.5 When considering temporary closure, the Manager may take the following steps:
- a) Consultation and cooperation with relevant stakeholders or trail stewards to determine remediation requirements;
 - b) Posting a public notice indicating the reason for closure, in the forms attached as Appendix B to this Policy;
 - c) Fencing and/or barricade placement as required; and
 - d) Monitoring to ensure compliance with the trail closure.
- 12.6 The authority for permanent closure of District trails rests with District Council.

13. TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENTS BY TRAIL STEWARDS

- 13.1 Trail stewards intending to conduct trail maintenance or enhancements within municipal boundaries shall submit proposals outlining their intentions to the District prior to commencing any work.
- 13.2 Proposals for maintenance or rehabilitation on District trails may be approved by the District if public safety, user conflicts, and environmental issues can be managed.
- 13.3 Proposals to enhance, expand, or diversify a District trail by constructing new sections of trail or re-routing trail may be approved by the District if:
- a) Public safety, user conflicts, and environmental issues can be managed; and
 - b) In the opinion of the Manager, the District has the resource capability to adequately manage the expanded trail system, or if the resources do not currently exist and the proponent agrees to enter into a long term use agreement where maintenance and management responsibility is passed onto the trail organization or steward.

14. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- 14.1 The Parks and Recreation Department (250.746.3106) shall hear concerns and inquiries, Monday to Friday, 7:30AM to 4:00PM. After hours emergency concerns and inquiries shall be directed to the Duty Foreman. Trail maintenance activities or information is advertised on the Parks and Recreation Department's pages on the District website (www.NorthCowichan.ca/trails).

15. HOURS OF OPERATION AND STAFF DEPLOYMENT

15.1 Trail maintenance work occurs year round. In general, tasks are divided into:

- a) Spring season – February to April
- b) Summer season – May to August
- c) Fall season – September to November
- d) Winter season – December to January

15.2 When in the opinion of the Manager abnormal conditions exist, overtime, additional District equipment and outside forces and equipment may be mobilized within existing budgets.

16. SAFETY

16.1 All work shall be carried out in accordance with the General Safety Regulations of the WorkSafeBC and the *British Columbia Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

17. APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Priority Trails Inventory
- Appendix B – Public Notice Signs
- Appendix C – Trail Stewards List

18. SUPPORTING REFERENCES

The *Local Government Act*, related council bylaws and policies, and other applicable Acts and Regulations, as amended from time to time.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler Trail Standards, First Edition.

APPROVAL HISTORY

WRITTEN BY: Don Stewart, Director, Parks and Recreation, Community Services Division	APPROVED BY: Council	DATE: February 19, 2020
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APPENDIX "A"

Maintenance Priority Trails Inventory

Appendix "A" assigns priority ratings for District trails in accordance with section 13 of the Policy. Each trail listed is described according to the trail types listed in sections 8 to 11 inclusive.

PRIORITY A TRAILS

Trail Name	General Location	Technical Trail Features?	Trail Type 1	Trail Type 2	Trail Type 3	Trail Type 4	Trail Type 5	Priority A
Al Howie Trail	South End	No	X					X
Askew Creek Drive	Chemainus	No	X					X
Averill Creek Trail	South End	No	X					X
Bisecticon	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Bumblebee	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Capstone Connector Trail	South End	No	X					X
Chicken Run	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Chocolate Tungle	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Crofton Connector Trails	Crofton	No	X					X
Crofton Seawalk	Crofton	No	X					X
Cross Cliff Side Trail	Mount Tzouhalem	No				X		X
Dike Trail	South End	No	X					X
Double D	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Finality	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X

Gibbins Road Connector Trail	South End	No	X					X
Keystone Drive Connector Trail	South End	No	X					X
Kingsview Connector Trails	Maple Bay	No	X					X
Lindsay Place Trail	Crofton	No		X				X
Loam Line	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Maple Syrup (Lower)	Maple Mountain	Yes			X			X
Maple Syrup (Upper)	Maple Mountain	Yes			X			X
Peters Lane	Maple Bay	No		X				X
Phloem (Upper)	Maple Mountain	Yes			X			X
Quamichan Park Rd Connector Trail	South End	No	X					X
Resurrection	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Rocky Mountain Ridge	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Rosewood Connector Trail	South End	No	X					X
Roys Revenge	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Salley O'Malley	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Sherman Road Soccer Pitch Trails	South End	No	X					X
Solar Coaster	Maple Mountain	Yes			X			X
Stonehaven Connector Trails	South End	No	X					X
T-Bone	Mount Tzouhalem	Yes			X			X
Tony's Arbutus	Maple Mountain	Yes			X			X
Upland Connector Trail	South End	No	X					X
York Road Connector Trail	South End	No	X					X

PRIORITY B TRAILS

Trail Name	General Location	Technical Trail Features?	Trail Type 1	Trail Type 2	Trail Type 3	Trail Type 4	Trail Type 5	Priority B
A Grand Traverse	Mount Tzouhalem	No			X			X
AGT Connector	Mount Tzouhalem	No			X			X
Askew Creek Park	Chemainus	No		X				X
Cross Trail	Mount Tzouhalem	No		X				X
Danalyzer	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Daniel Street Stairs	Chemainus	No		X				X
Field of Dreams	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Fluid	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Freezone	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Fuller Lake Park	Chemainus	No		X				X
Greg's Dash	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Herons Woods Trails	South End	No		X				X
Interior Trails	Wul'aam Park	No		X				X
Loggers Lane	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Lower T	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
M600 Connector	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Maple Way Trail	Maple Mountain	No		X				X
Mom's Park	South End	No		X				X
M-One	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Muni Trail	Mount Tzouhalem	No			X			X

Northview Trail	Crofton	No		X				X
Osborne Bay Park	Crofton	No		X				X
Perimter Trail	Chemainus Lake	No		X				X
Perimter Trail	Wul'aam Park	No		X				X
Phloem (Lower)	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Properties Park Trails	Maple Bay	No		X				X
Ronnie's Rockin Ride	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
School's Out	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Shore Pine Connector	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Shore Pine Loop	Mount Tzouhalem	No			X			X
Showtime	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Story Trail	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Story Trail Connector	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
This Way That Way	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Tidemark Way Trail	Crofton	No		X				X
Twist and Shout	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X
Viewpoint Trail	Mount Tzouhalem	No			X			X
Xylem Trail (Lower)	Maple Mountain	No						X
Xylem Trail (Upper)	Maple Mountain	Yes			X			X
YBA Roadie	Mount Tzouhalem	No						X

PRIORITY C TRAILS

Trail Name	General Location	Technical Trail Features?	Trail Type 1	Trail Type 2	Trail Type 3	Trail Type 4	Trail Type 5	Priority C
Awesome Trail	Mount Tzouhalem	No				X		X
Blue Trail	Maple Mountain	No					X	X
Green Trail	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Orange Trail	Maple Mountain	No					X	X
Pink Trail	Maple Mountain	No					X	X
Southview Trail	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Southview Trail Bypass	Maple Mountain	No			X			X
Yellow Trail	Maple Mountain	No					X	X
Yellow Trail (Viewpoint Extension)	Maple Mountain	No					X	X

PRIORITY D TRAILS

Trail Name	General Location	Technical Trail Features?	Trail Type 1	Trail Type 2	Trail Type 3	Trail Type 4	Trail Type 5	Priority D

APPENDIX "B"
Public Notice Signs

WARNING

TRAIL CLOSED

To all trail users:

This trail is Temporarily/Permanently closed due to hazardous conditions.

If you require additional information please contact the Municipality of North Cowichan at

trails@northcowichan.ca or (250) XXX-XXXX.

APPENDIX "B"
Public Notice Signs

WARNING
UNAUTHORIZED
TRAIL

To trail builder:

You have one week from (insert effective date) to contact the Municipality of North Cowichan at trails@northcowichan.ca or (250) XXX-XXXX or else action will be taken and your trail will be permanently closed.

APPENDIX "C"
Trail Stewards List

Cowichan Trail Stewardship Society