

## N.B. Department of Natural Resources Trail Management Principles

### Background

There is currently more than 4 000 km of trails on DNR Lands, divided into three main categories:

Trails Category	km	Comment
Non-Motorized Trails SNBT completed ( <i>Parks Act</i> ) SNBT completed ( <i>CL&amp;FA</i> ) SNBT partially useable( <i>Parks Acts</i> )	810 40 350	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% of SNBT is located on abandoned railway bed</li> <li>Approximately 750 km of SNBT is leased to the NBFSC in the winter</li> </ul>
Snowmobile Trails Leased under <i>CL&amp;FA</i> Unauthorized trails on <i>CL&amp;FA</i> Leased under <i>Parks Act</i>	1 138 1 674 719	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lease for the snowmobile trails on Crown land is under review</li> </ul>
ATV Trails Authorized under <i>CL&amp;FA</i> Under review Unauthorized	130 800 unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorizations for ATV trails are issued by lease or license of occupation</li> </ul>
<b>Total number of trails on DNR Land</b>	<b>4 142</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>4 942 km if including ATV trails under review</b></li> </ul>

In November 2003, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) decided to develop a strategy for the management of motorized and non-motorized trails on its lands, in response to various events and issues such as:

- The end of financing for the development of Sentier NB Trails (SNBT) in 1999. DNR had to switch from a development mode to a maintenance mode. For the past three years, DNR has been signing a maintenance Agreement with the New Brunswick Trails Council Inc. to maintain the completed sections of SNBT.
- The release of the ATV Task Force Report in 2001. The Government has since implemented a number of the recommendations, including the creation of a Safety Committee and a Technical Committee for Motorized Trails. DNR is responsible for chairing the Technical Committee.
- The amendments to the *All Terrain Vehicle Act* (now the *Off Road Vehicle Act*) in 2003. The new *Off Road Vehicle Act*:
  - established the ATVers as a new major user group and recognized their need to develop a provincial trail system;
  - identified DNR as the signatory of the All Terrain Vehicle Management Agreement with the New Brunswick All-Terrain Vehicles Federation Inc. (NBATVF);
  - established the Trail Management Trust Fund (TMTF) for the development of ATV and Snowmobile trails in the Province; and
  - identified DNR as custodian and trustee of the TMTF and responsible for the TMTF Advisory Board.

- The aging infrastructure of the railway beds acquired by DNR in the early 1990s. The state of this infrastructure constitutes a significant liability for DNR as well as an increasing financial burden.
- The decline of snowmobiling in the province and the need to rationalize the provincial trail system to meet today's capabilities.
- The identification of unauthorized snowmobile trails on DNR lands and the need to legalize those trails.
- The rise of unauthorized ATV use on many completed sections of the SNBT located in remote areas of the province. This has contributed significantly to accelerating the degradation of the trails and the infrastructure.
- The absence of a provincial ATV trail system and the need to plan for its development.

During the last year, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been working with key stakeholders to develop a Trail Management Strategy that will ensure the harmonious and efficient development of the three major trail systems on DNR lands and across the Province. As a result, Trail Management Principles have been developed to guide the management of motorized and non-motorized trails on Crown land. Establishing and adopting the Trail Management Principles is key to the future management of trails on DNR land.

The twelve Trail Management Principles have been developed in accordance with DNR's Crown Land Management Principles. They are categorized under four Key Result Areas (KRA): 1) Protecting the Land, the People, the Environment and the Resources; 2) Establishing Responsible Financial Practices; 3) Working Together; and 4) Optimizing the Three Trail Systems.

## **Trail Management Principles**

The management of trails in the province will be in accordance with the following ten principles, categorized under four Key Result Areas (KRA):

### **KRA-1 Protecting the Land, the People, the Environment and the Resources:**

#### **1. Protect the Land:**

DNR shall make every effort to ensure a rational allocation of departmental lands toward trail development. The allocation of DNR lands for trail systems will be consistent with the proven capacity of the user group to develop, maintain and patrol the trail systems. In addition, the future development of the three trail systems will be done in such a way that further subdivision of DNR lands is minimized.

#### **2. Protect the People:**

DNR will make every effort to ensure the development of a safe trail infrastructure system and a safe trail riding and hiking experience. DNR will also make every effort to maintain the structural integrity of Sentier NB Trails (SNBT) and the undeveloped abandoned railway beds.

#### **3. Protect the Environment:**

Trail development, maintenance and use will be done in such a way that it will minimize the impact to the environment and the resources. DNR will restrict and/or prohibit trail development in environmentally sensitive areas and in areas of cultural significance.

#### **4. Strategic Enforcement:**

DNR enforcement activities on trails shall be strengthened and carried out in such a way that it will maximize the limited resources available while ensuring minimal safety and liability risk. Increased enforcement on the three trail systems will: 1) build respect for property owner rights; 2) reduce ATV and snowmobile use on public roads; 3) build respect for dedicated use trails; 4) enhance safe operation of safely equipped vehicles; 5) increase overall safety of ATV and snowmobile riders and the public; 6) improve the image of the ATV riders; and 7) improve the perception of how well DNR is handling the overall governance and management of the trail systems in N.B.

### **KRA-2 Establishing Responsible Financial Practices:**

#### **5. Fair Financial Return:**

The use of trails for motorized vehicles shall be subject to the user pay principle. The two Federations have access to funding to ensure the development of their respective trail systems and in keeping with the user pay principle, they will be responsible for the financial burden of developing and managing these trail systems

#### **6. Financial Accountability:**

DNR shall make every effort to ensure that the management of the three trail systems is in keeping with the funding, staffing and volunteer capabilities of the three trail user groups and the funding and staffing capabilities of DNR. It is critical that DNR and the three trail user groups be held accountable for all financial actions and activities.

## **KRA-3 Optimizing the Three Trail Systems:**

### **7. Appropriate Trail Systems:**

DNR shall make every effort to ensure that the three trail systems meet the needs and capabilities of the three trail user groups and are in keeping with DNR requirements. DNR will work with the:

- New Brunswick Trail Council Inc. to ensure that future development for SNBT occurs near or within municipalities and areas of the Province presenting high tourism potential and high potential use.
- New Brunswick Federation of Snowmobile Club to ensure that the provincial snowmobile trail network meets the need of the users and is in keeping with the Motorized Snow Vehicle Trail Management Agreement and the DNR tenure conditions.
- New Brunswick All-Terrain Vehicle Federation to ensure that the provincial ATV trail network under development meets the needs of the users and is in keeping with the All Terrain Vehicle Trail Management Agreement and the DNR trail authorizations.

## **KRA-4 Working Together:**

### **8. Establish Partnerships:**

DNR shall work with the three trail user groups and other organizations or levels of government to establish partnerships that will ensure the harmonious and efficient development and maintenance of the three trail systems. DNR will:

- work with licensees to resolve ongoing issues with motorized trails;
- partner with municipalities and First Nations to manage sections of SNBT located near and within their boundaries; and
- work with all key stakeholders to:
  - resolve ongoing issues with motorized trails and to identify permanent routes for authorized trails; and
  - explore the possibility of establishing a Trails Authority as a mechanism to ensure a more effective coordination of trail development in the province.

### **9. Consult the Public:**

Public consultation shall be an integral part of the trail development process of the three trail user groups. DNR will ensure that the adjacent land owners, other trail stakeholders and the general public are informed and involved in the development of the three trail systems.

### **10. Stakeholder Responsibilities:**

The risk and responsibilities of developing and maintaining the three trail systems shall be shared with the three trail user groups. It is important that the three trail user groups be held accountable for all of their actions and activities, as well as possess a strong vision for the management of the three trail systems.