

Draft Trails Strategy for British Columbia:
Summary of Feedback

March 2009

Province of BC

In partnership with

**Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts**

Ministry of Environment – BC Parks

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. Interest in a Trails Strategy	4
2. Vision, Benefits and Guiding Principles.....	7
3. Current Status, Trends and Priority Issues.....	12
4. Key Components.....	15
5. Collaborative Planning.....	18
6. Good Governance	22
7. Sustainable Resources.....	27
8. Effective Management.....	30
9. Comprehensive Information	38
10. Strategic Marketing.....	43
11. Implementation	46
12. Other Actions.....	52
13. Other Ideas.....	54
Separate Documents:	58
Appendix A: Feedback Received Using the Feedback Form	
Appendix B: Feedback Received Without Use of Feedback Form	
Appendix C: Information Session Meeting Notes	

Introduction

In 2006, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment – BC Parks and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, undertook the development of a draft recreation Trails Strategy for British Columbia (BC). The draft Trails Strategy was developed with the support of a Trails Strategy Committee (TSC) consisting of representatives of trail user groups, governmental agencies, academia and First Nations.

Following the initial TSC work, an extensive set of information sessions were held across the province between November 18th, 2008 and January 27th, 2009 to encourage feedback on the draft Strategy. A total of 31 meetings were arranged in 11 locations attended by about 1400 individuals. At 10 locations, separate meetings were arranged with local First Nations in the morning, with governmental inter-agency staff in the afternoon followed by an open public meeting in the evening. The 11th location included an open public meeting only to address the large interest in the Greater Vancouver area.

At each meeting, comments from attendees were captured in general with notes taken at the meetings and then attendees were encouraged to provide further feedback using a structured Feedback Form posted on the MTCA website. The MTCA website itself encouraged anyone interested in providing feedback, whether they were able to attend a meeting or not, to do so using the Feedback Form. Over 260 organizations and individuals provided feedback including a wide range of recreation and trail user groups, environmental organizations, government agencies, resource users and First Nations.

The collective feedback from over 300 pages of input is synthesized in this *Summary of Feedback* report, providing a range of representative comments. The following separate appendices provide a full record of the feedback received:

- Appendix A: Feedback Received Using Feedback Form
- Appendix B: Feedback Received Without use of the Feedback Form
- Appendix C: Information Session Meeting Notes

This Summary document – along with the Appendices – is being considered by the Trails Strategy Committee, including the agency partners, in the preparation of a revised Trails Strategy for BC.

The Summary is organized by the topics covered in the Feedback Form which in turn largely follows the outline of the draft Trails Strategy. The input received per topic using the Feedback Form (Appendix A) is augmented by the comments received not using the Form (Appendix B) and from the meeting notes (Appendix C).

The focus of this Summary is on input aimed to make the revised Trails Strategy better. Many questions were asked in the Feedback Form about specific implementation issues, for example, for each action, the question was asked: ‘what steps would you recommend be done to achieve these actions?’. In addition, many respondents offered good ideas aimed to help ensure implementation of the approved Strategy is effective. This

important input is not summarized in this document, but will be assessed in the next implementation phase of the project once the Trails Strategy is finalized and approved. That said some implementation-related comments are provided in the Summary.

This Summary document has been compiled for John Hawkings, Manager, Trails, MTCA and chair of the Trails Strategy Committee by the consulting team supporting the project: Terje Vold, George Sranko, Warren Mitchell, and Blair Baldwin.

1. Interest in a Trails Strategy

The Feedback Form asked respondents to indicate the nature of their interest in a Trails Strategy. Several responses cited their interest in one or more specific trail use activities as their key interest. This included interest in trails for hiking, mountain biking, cycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, quad riding and off-road motorcycling as well as interests in trails for commuting, rail trails, cross-country skiing, heritage protection, marine canoeing/kayaking, 4x4 vehicle use, and dog sledding. Interest was mentioned for having some trails that are handicap accessible and available for those not fully physically enabled.

Another expressed interest was having community trails, interconnected network of trails that can link communities, trails that link communities with the backcountry, and wilderness trails in quiet undisturbed settings. Interest was expressed for multi-use trails with some feeling all trails should be open to all users whereas others feeling that there needs to be opportunities for all trails users but not necessarily on every trail.

Input from the majority of individuals and organizations, who often were trail enthusiasts or came from a recreation organization, indicated support in-principle for a Trails Strategy, the general direction provided by the draft Trails Strategy, and the need for greater provincial recognition of the importance of trails. That said there was some concern that the Strategy might go in a direction that was not supported – as inferred from a number of comments below.

Interest was also expressed that the organization they are a part of needs to be directly involved with or have input into the Strategy, for example, the forest, range, agriculture and trapping sector; the Metis people; and various other government agencies.

First Nations interests expressed at various meetings, by one or more First Nations representatives included the following:

- That the Trails Strategy be developed in a more collaborative manner with First Nations
- The need for trail interest groups to develop relationships with each tribe individually
- Informing First Nations communities about trail projects is vital; that without community support a project won't happen
- That trails not be introduced without First Nations approval and/or involvement
- Importance of government-to-government relationships with First Nations

- With each First Nation, need to identify what is of interest to them in their specific territory
- That an appropriate approach for trail planning and meaningful consultation needs to be developed that is specific to each local area and band(s) whose territories are affected by the trail
- Concern expressed that trails and trail use can cause environmental and cultural heritage impacts, particularly in regard to unregulated trail use
- Concern that trails can open areas of First Nations cultural and spiritual significance to outside trail users
- That many trails in some areas are First Nations trails that are culturally important to First Nations such as traditional use trails where stewardship issues arise
- There are educational and interpretive opportunities with trails related to First Nations traditional use and ecology when done in a partnership manner with First Nations
- That there are potential tourism economic benefits from trails for First Nations
- That some special funding envelopes are available to First Nations to support trails
- Interest in being involved with recommendations for legislative change
- Do not support the use of the term “Crown lands”
- Do not want to be isolationists – want to be part of the overall scheme
- Some First Nations expressed interest in follow-up meetings in their territories about the Strategy

Stakeholders and agency staff provided a wide range of specific responses using the Feedback Form that tend to relate to proposed key components as follows.

Collaborative Planning

- The need to secure opportunities for all trail users was raised
- Concern was expressed about loss of access by both motorized and non-motorized trail interests and the need for continued consistent access
- There was concern that motorized trail use could impact some sectors’ views of ‘backcountry values’
- The need to address and reduce user conflicts was raised by several respondents particularly the need to resolve motorized and non-motorized issues
- Interest was expressed that we need more trails particularly in some areas of the province where there are few and to preserve the ones we do have
- There was interest for a ‘responsible’ motorized trail system and interest for protecting some trails for their non-motorized experience
- Concern was raised that trails developed and used for a particular activity are being impacted by uses the trail was not designed to support and therefore the need to conserve these trails for their intended use
- The need for an easier trail approval process was mentioned
- There was also concern about the proliferation of some types of trails
- Ensuring that trails and trail use minimize impacts on other resource tenure holders was raised

Good Governance

- The need for appropriate legislation was mentioned
- Support was raised for off-road vehicle registration and licensing
- The need for greater assistance to address liability and insurance was raised

Sustainable Resources

- The need for support funding was raised to help local trail user groups

Effective Management

- Views were offered that the Trails Strategy not favor one user group over another, and that it should be designed in a manner that fosters both a land ethic and respect among all user groups for each other
- Another comment felt that the Trails Strategy should coordinate and facilitate trail access, construction, maintenance and management among all trail interests
- Concern was expressed that the lack of management is causing existing trails to be unusable
- Trail management activities are needed that address the prevention and spread of invasive plants
- There was concern about the environmental impact of trails particularly on fragile ecosystems as a result of irresponsible or inappropriate motorized use
- The important value placed on the outdoors and nature was mentioned
- The need for appropriate compliance and enforcement efforts was raised
- Clearly marking trails with rules that are enforceable was stressed
- Concern was raised that we not create undue expectations regarding how trail interests can influence industrial resource road decisions
- Loss of access on private lands was noted as a concern

Comprehensive Information

- No specific points raised at this point in the feedback

Strategic Marketing

- The tourism benefits stemming from trails was raised as an interest
- There was also concern that tourism/marketing not be done in a manner that creates undue impacts on wildlife

Implementation

- The implementation of the Trails Strategy was viewed as absolutely critical
- The need for improved signage was mentioned
- Better aligning the Trails Strategy with other initiatives like climate change programs was raised

A commonly expressed interest at the meetings and from other submissions from representatives of other resource sectors and agency staff was the concern that trails

and/or the Strategy could impact their interest such as forestry, range use, agriculture, trapping, drinking water protection, control of invasive plants, etc.

2. Vision, Benefits and Guiding Principles

Vision

The Feedback Form asked respondents if they were in general agreement with the proposed vision, and how it can be improved. For those responding to this question:

- Yes - 86% responded 'yes' they were in general agreement with the vision,
- No - 14% responded 'no' they were not in general agreement with the vision.

Many comments expressed support for the current vision and said that they thought it was thoughtfully prepared and resonated with the respondent.

Opportunities to improve or clarify the vision were also offered by some of those who were in general agreement as well as those who were not in agreement. The most frequently cited concerns or suggested improvement included:

- Confusion over the term 'accessible to all'. The concept of opportunities for all trail users within the overall provincial/regional/local trail system but not every trail for every user was a suggested way to make intent clearer.
- Adding to the vision the need to protect the environment.
- Confusion or concern about the term 'world-renowned'. General comment was this overstated what needs to be delivered; terms like 'excellent', 'high quality' and 'comprehensive' were suggested instead.
- Confusion regarding term 'sustainable'. It was noted that it needs to be clear if it refers to financial and/or environmental sustainability.

A variety of reasons were cited by those who were not in general agreement with the vision such as concerns about what 'accessible to all' meant and that important local trails will never be 'world-renowned but need to be included in the Strategy. Other concerns were about the need to have different trails for different types of use, and the need to resolve user conflicts.

Other key messages received about the Vision from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Need to ensure respect for other resource users
- Need to factor in environmental integrity
- Add: "regions" before 'the province'
- Add: 'safe and respectful use'
- Need to emphasize the quality of the experience
- Need references to linkages and connectivity
- Add: 'protect trail users and interests'
- Make it clear that there is a need to establish specific trails for specific uses
- Concept of 'trails for everybody, but not every trail for everybody' makes sense

- Consider adding something about ‘promotion and use’
- Change ‘accessible to all’ to ‘a variety of access opportunities for all’
- Need to recognize access for physically impaired

Benefits

The Feedback Form asked respondents if the indicated key benefits in the draft Trails Strategy (i.e. economic, community, health, environment, and transportation) were appropriate or not, and if there are other key benefits. For those responding to this question:

- Yes - 91% responded ‘yes’ they felt the indicated key benefits were appropriate,
- No - 9% responded ‘no’ they felt the indicated benefits were not appropriate.

Other suggested benefits that were raised included respect and appreciation for the environment and outdoors; First Nations-related (e.g. to recognize and address unique benefits and challenges for First Nations); education; safety; being active; preserving nature and reducing backcountry impacts; and recognition of the capital asset associated with the current trail system.

The most frequently mentioned comment to improve the key benefits was that the economic benefit should not be listed first as too much weight may be placed on it with the suggestion made that it be listed last and/or concern that economic values not trump other benefits that were felt to be more important by the respondent.

Other comments, concerns or suggested improvements to the indicated key benefits included:

Economic

- Need to recognize under ‘economic’ benefits the considerable volunteer efforts that manage trails
- Concern that property values could be degraded by trail abuse or spread invasive plants; or that property values could also increase for individual land owners by increasing access to trails and transportation routes
- Trails can attract people to community because of lifestyle especially for those with tele-commuting jobs
- ‘Higher tax revenues’ should not be promoted as this may discourage buy-in with the Strategy

Community

- Should mention increased opportunities for social interaction through active participation in trail activities
- Fostering a sense of community
- Focus should be on benefits to residents rather than tourists

Health

- Health benefits should be listed first
- Decreased need for health funding may accrue from improved health with trail use
- There are also spiritual, emotional and mental benefits which are equally important but which the word 'health' only loosely conveys
- Concern that physical health benefits do not accrue with motorized activities yet there is attendant noise and air pollution

Environment

- It should be given greater emphasis
- Desire that wording more strongly stress the need to protect the environment
- Trail access may be in conflict with environmental values
- More use can result in greater impacts to the backcountry

Transportation

- View that motorized transport is not 'green'
- There can be safety concerns with motorized uses
- The cited transportation benefits like trails for commuting are not that applicable to many areas such as northern BC

For those responding that they did not feel the indicated key benefits were appropriate, reasons include that the discussion over-emphasized benefits with no explicit recognition of costs and dis-benefits; that some benefits are in direct conflict with each other; and that there is a disconnect between trails maintained locally by small communities with lack of funding or support, and the benefits from those in larger communities who use those local trails.

Other key messages received about the Vision from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- First Nations comment noted that educational benefits should be added e.g. interpretive, traditional uses and ecology. Partnerships are an important aspect
- Under 'economic benefits' there is a need to explicitly refer to 'job creation'. Trail development and maintenance provide 'entry level' work experience which can be particularly helpful for rural and First Nations communities suffering high unemployment levels
- Despite some comments at public meetings to the contrary, that there are physical health benefits from motorized trail use
- The document outlines the benefits of planning but is limited in a discussion of potential risks to other values from trails. Nowhere is it recognized for example that trails may be traversing community watersheds.

Guiding Principles

The Feedback Form asked respondents if the four proposed guiding principles for a system of trails makes sense or not, and if there are other guiding principles to add. For those responding to this question:

- Yes - 92% responded 'yes' they felt the guiding principles make sense;
- No - 8% responded 'no' they felt the guiding principles did not make sense.

Several comments indicated support for the various guiding principles and provided reasons why they are important, often underscoring the points raised in the draft Strategy.

Some respondents suggested other guiding principles including: sustainability; goal of minimum impact; honoring natural habitat; respecting the rights of non-recreational users; letting local communities be responsible for regulating local trails; promoting trail connectivity across regions; excluding motorized use; and adaptive management.

Comments, concerns or suggested improvements to the guiding principles were also offered and included:

Build on partnerships and collaboration

- There needs to be sufficient opportunities for public review and comment on projects
- That this not be interpreted to allow one user group to overpower another and degrade their experience
- That the role of government as facilitator or leader needs to be mentioned
- That the principle is good provided that this does not overburden groups with paperwork

Foster environmental and cultural stewardship

- Consider environmental stewardship as foundational or the top-tiered priority
- That environmental stewardship is great but not at the expense of actual use
- More discussion is needed on trail degradation, restoration of damages related to inappropriate use and protection of the natural environment
- This should include experiential and visual integrity
- Need to use trails as a vehicle for interpretive/educational opportunities to help visitors and residents understand and appreciate natural values and features around them
- Without licensing, registration and regulation, that off-road vehicle use does not foster environmental stewardship
- Cultural heritage values are important to recognize
- Trails with locally significant heritage and recreation use need to be recognized and protected

Secure recreational opportunities for all users

- Need to recognize that some uses are not compatible with other uses or appropriate with respect to environmental impacts
- Concern that motorized uses may limit non-motorized opportunities or diminish the quality of the experience
- A 'balance' needs to be sought between the needs of the various user groups
- Focus should be on resident user needs
- The notion of changing demographics and demand for trails near urban and residential areas needs to be captured here

Provide benefits for communities and the province

- Should add: "...benefits for individuals, communities, and the province"; and that the principle should address the need for conflict resolution.

For those responding that they did not feel the guiding principles made sense, various reasons were given including: the principles do not take into account any impact to the natural environment with respect to sensitive ecosystems and endangered species; disagreement with the notion that opportunities for all users should be secured (e.g. high costs associated with providing trail facilities for some special needs users); and disagreement with the notion that securing more opportunities for users can reduce conflicts unless there is education and enforcement i.e. providing more opportunities may spread the conflict across more trails.

Other key messages received about the Guiding Principles from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- First Nations comment noted the need to define how you build partnerships and what it means to collaborate
- Need to add respect for First Nations interests and other resource values
- Many areas of the province are covered by a wide variety of different forest and range tenures. These tenures grant rights and responsibilities. Trails can have economic and management impacts to these tenure holders and these impacts should be assessed and considered prior to formal designation. This information should be part of the 'public interest' principles which could/should be built into the Strategy. Analysis regarding public interest impacts should include direct contact with the tenure holders as well as discussion with local MFR staff (and potentially the Sub-Regional Management Committees).
- Rossland has a Guiding Principle related to 'Community Building' that should be considered
- User groups think of themselves as volunteer stewards and what makes them proud is looking after trails. Suggest that this be reflected in the Guiding Principles
- Add a new principle: Trails in multi-use watersheds will be designed and managed to prevent negative impacts on water quality particular water used as community drinking water sources.

3. Current Status, Trends and Priority Issues

The Feedback Form asked respondents, when reviewing the material in the draft Trails Strategy about current status, trends and priority issues, is there any other information dealing with these three aspects that they wished to add. For those responding using the Feedback Form 82% provided some additional information while 18% responded that they had nothing to add while sometimes noting they agreed with what was provided in the draft Strategy. The additional information offered included:

Current Status

How many kilometers of trail do we have in BC?

- It is not clear if the 30 000 km of trails cited is actually protected and recognized or if they are subject to change of use and blockage of access in the future
- Should address the amount and growth of trail use by type of use
- The level of management of trails is not described and it appears to be grossly inadequate
- The current status of many of the trails, and the access roads leading to the trailheads, is that the trails and roads are in a poor state of maintenance
- Resource roads are not mentioned which are extensively used as trails by motorized recreationists
- In addition to the many kilometers of trails managed by agencies, there is an abundance of unauthorized trails on Crown land.
- Current status is actually a lot more ‘wild west’ than what is being portrayed

Rail Trails, Spirit of 2010 Trails, and Trans-Canada Trail

- A number of comments raised issues or concerns about rail trail management e.g. that rail trails should be multi-use; that they should not include motorized use; that existing rights held by resource users to use or cross portions of a rail grade for industrial operations needs recognition
- It was noted that a portion of the Trans-Canada Trail is also on ‘private lands’

Other trails need to be profiled

- Need to mention the myriad of regional and local municipal trail initiatives in the urban context
- Need to mention other key trails such as the Gold Rush Snowmobile Trail between 70 Mile House to Wells

Trends

Changing demographics

- The Strategy needs to reference and identify the needs of all generations, including generations X and Y and youth; it is not all about the baby boomers
- Older users will likely want better quality trails
- The population is aging and wants to walk or bike
- BC's population is becoming increasingly multi-cultural with more ethnic diversity of trail users

Increasing diversity of users

- Some trail activities such as snowshoeing, cross country skiing, dog sledding and 4X4 vehicle use are not mentioned
- The increasing diversity of users means that management of trail usage becomes more complex e.g. zoning and enforcement, etc
- Comment raised that motorized uses may not have increased as stated in the draft Strategy

Increasing recognition of economic benefits

- Comment raised that commercial recreation on Crown land often leads to conflicts with non-commercial recreation land uses

Increasing transportation role for trails

- Comment that trails used primarily for commuting should not be regarded as 'recreation' trails; that these two distinct types of trails should be designed for different objectives

Suggested additional trends include:

- Trend to increasingly recognize environmental benefits and reduce impacts on the environment; another respondent noted the trend that environmental impacts are increasing due to trail use
- Trend to increase development reduces trail opportunities
- Decrease in participation in organized sports and an increase in individual sports
- The growing gap between rich and poor where low cost recreation is becoming increasingly more important for young families
- Trend that single track trails are being converted to double track thereby diminishing their value to the original user
- Trend to impose liability for trail use onto user groups when the land belongs to the Crown

Other key messages received about the trends from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- First Nations comment stressed importance of integrating youth into the Strategy. Everyplace in BC has one goal in common – to look after the kids.
- First Nations suggested that the Strategy turn things upside down – rather than focusing on baby boomers, we need instead to begin with our kids.

Priority Issues

Access

- Add “loss of trail tread due to development and resource extraction”
- Concern raised that tenured resource uses can impact public access
- Restrictions on motorized use should not be viewed as an access issue since it is critical to ensuring high quality experiences for non-motorized users as well as environmental preservation
- Key issue is compatibility between motorized and non-motorized recreation, and need to separate motorized and non-motorized trails

Limited funding

- Limited funding also impacts the capacity of groups to do the necessary consultation and planning needed to get trail projects approved

Insurance/liability

- When trying to provide trails on private land, the perceived liability issues are paramount, followed with the ability to control misuse such as garbage dumping and vandalism

Environmental impacts

- Protection of natural features and values should be the top priority issue
- Explicitly mention the need to limit the spread of invasive plants and that this should be addressed in trail management plans
- Unapproved trails with known environmental concerns need to be identified
- Current requirements to address environmental impacts before trails are authorized are complex, time consuming and costly to local trail groups

Limited resources

- Local trail groups face stringent government requirements before trail management agreements can be reached
- Requirements for First Nations consultation and authorization are often very time consuming, unclear, and complex to local groups to the extent that perhaps First Nations consultation should be a separate issue
- Existing environmental impact requirements are onerous on local trail groups

Legislation

- Need to implement the ORV Coalition recommendations regarding the registration, licensing and management of ORVs
- Need legislated zoning of motorized and non-motorized use

Compliance and enforcement

- Given conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users, this issue should be ranked higher

- Licensing of motorized and mechanized vehicles so that those abusing the resource can be identified is needed to support C&E

Increasing trail use

- Need to identify the carrying capacity, or limits of acceptable change, of individual trails

Suggested additional key issues include:

- Integration of recreational trail use into all land resource planning
- Authorizations and approval –uncertain status of trail approvals including lack of timely approvals.
- Loss of and damage to trails as a result of development and resource extraction
- Need to acquire/designate land for trails near residential areas as soon as possible since development and urban sprawl are inevitable and will make this progressively more expensive and difficult
- Trail classification, communication strategies, and public education programs
- Conflict resolution
- Trail quality and quality of experience

Other key messages received about the priority issues from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Concern about the impacts of trails on other resource users such as timber harvesting opportunities, range use, agricultural interest, etc.
- Concern about impact on drinking water
- First Nations comments noted issue of foreshore access if landowners block public walkways (e.g. via docks) since walking along the lakeshores is one of the finest recreation trail activities

4. Key Components

The Feedback Form asked respondents if the six components listed represent the key requirements for a sustainable trail program for BC, and if there are any key components that are missing. For those responding to this question:

- Yes - 83% responded 'yes' the six components represent key requirements;
- No - 17% responded 'no' the six components did not represent key requirements.

A recommendation most frequently made was the need to add an environmental component where an assessment of the impact to the natural environment is made before proceeding with a trail project and so that actions are taken to help achieve the indicated environmental benefits of trails. It was noted that if trails are to be sustainable they must be environmentally sustainable, that there are a myriad of unauthorized trails that may be harmful to wildlife or wildlife habitat that need to be addressed, and that we need clearly defined limits of acceptable change to help avert undue impacts.

Other suggestions to add a new component and/or ensure these noted concerns get addressed include: transportation and tourism (i.e. to link with economic and transportation trends discussed earlier); communication; citizen participation; sustainable trail experiences; recognition that politics can make or break the Strategy.

Comments were also offered that ‘best practices’ apply to the entire Strategy not just private land; need for clear commitment for secure access to trails for everyone within a local area (but not necessarily on every trail); that it was not clear under which component trail maintenance fits; and that streamlining the trail approval/agreement process to limit the burden on volunteer groups and clubs was important.

Some respondents disagreed with *strategic marketing* as a key component. Comments included: makes it sound like the province is trying to sell the hard volunteer work of club members to overseas tourists; has nothing to do with sustainable trails - in fact marketing increases trail use which in itself leads to increased maintenance requirements; you do not need to market or sell trails - if you build a quality trail system, people will utilize it

There was feedback to revise *effective management* where focus should be on building and sustaining trails, and not on standards and compliance & enforcement.

Other comments about the six components included a need to prioritize them with a comment indicating that improving legislation and management of ORVs as laid out in ORV Coalition recommendations should be first. Another comment was that efforts to gather ‘comprehensive information’ should not take away from the first four listed components.

In addition to the above, there were other comments specific to the proposed six components and how they were described in the draft Strategy document including:

Collaborative planning

- Other resource uses already exist along the trail networks and these uses are equally important to the province with regard to social and economic benefits
- Concern that there have been closures without consultation or relocation plans with motorized groups – and that this moves the problem but doesn’t resolve it
- Consider adding: identify known environmental concerns associated with existing trail systems (either approved or not) and develop plans to mitigate and reduce these environmental concerns

Good governance

- That legislative improvements are needed to support the better management of all trails and should not just focus on motorized users
- That the recommendations of the ORV Coalition need to be implemented regarding legislative and policy changes
- That access regulation is needed where the default allows motorized use and provides clear guidelines on how motorized access can be regulated/restricted

- That the provincial government needs to provide assistance or support to trail groups to obtain insurance coverage

Sustainable resources

- Some confusion was expressed what the ‘sustainable resources’ title meant given the proposed actions. Suggestions to improve the title included: ‘adequate financial resources’; ‘sustainable funding resources’ or it should refer to the physical sustainability of the trail system e.g. to prevent inappropriate use from destroying the trail
- Comments were provided that the provincial government needs to fund trail development particularly for longer trails as local government does not have financial resources to do this; and that maintenance funding must be annual and sustainable as volunteers should not be expected by the province to manage a ‘world class trail system’
- It was suggested that the use of stewardship agreements is part of this component

Effective management

- A variety of comments were offered including: that this begins with planning a manageable system; that regulations and enforcement are needed to prevent the destruction of sensitive ecosystems and endangered species and to protect drinking water; that greater emphasis is needed on how this applies to licensing of motorized vehicles; and that since we don’t have a right to ‘open access’ in BC (as occurs in many parts of Europe) that public access needs to be secured at the land development and rezoning stage

Comprehensive information

- Comments were offered including concern that gathering comprehensive information not be used as a stalling tactic to delay work on the first four components; and that it isn’t clear that the government has been able to succeed in gathering or managing trail data in the past

Strategic marketing

- Feedback included concern that the efforts of local volunteers who build and maintain trails will be exploited for the benefit of commercial operators or non-locals and that this could mean a loss of local control of trails; that while a good trails network could certainly be a draw for tourism, some volunteers might have objections if their trail is ‘marketed’ inappropriately; and that any marketing needs to follow assurances that good governance is in place first

Other comments included the need to focus on non-motorized use (given global warming issues), while others expressed concern that there has been too much focus on non-motorized trails. A comment recommended that the Strategy provide clear statements on motorized use. It was also suggested that the Strategy needs to place more emphasis on preserving trails for the future; provide greater acknowledgement of support provided by volunteers as they are the backbone of trail projects; and better recognize the big differences (use, politics, communication, management, etc) between urban trails, ‘rural’ trails, and backcountry trails.

5. Collaborative Planning

Proposed Action #1: Collaboratively develop provincial and local trail system plans that secure opportunities for all trail users

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 54% responded Very High
- 35% responded High
- 11% responded Moderate
- No one responded Low

This was the second highest rated action of the 17 proposed in the draft Strategy.

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- To minimize conflict and encourage use by classifying the trails into the most appropriate types of use
- Recognition that nothing will be accomplished without planning and collaboration, and that a consensus based approach that brings various trail interests together should yield outcomes that are satisfactory to all trail users
- It was noted that no coherent trails system is possible without a clear plan, and that most of the planning effort is about engaging people
- Comments were received from non-motorized users who feel their trail experience is negatively affected by motorized use that it is important to be able to identify and secure trails for motorized users; this action is seen as an important way to deal with the motorized and non-motorized issue, and that it is important all trail users get along
- There was also feedback that the conflicts may be more perceived than real, and that collaborative planning that brings user groups together will enable trails to be classified in a manner that can be broadly supported
- It was also noted that a collaborative approach can reduce the amount of duplication in trail work, increase cooperative dialogue and projects between organizations, address trail connectivity, and maximize funding opportunities
- There was also concern that some trails or trail opportunities are under threat and that planning is needed to identify key trail values so they are factored into land and resource use decisions on both public and private land

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Recognition that there are already a great number of trails already in existence and therefore a higher priority is determining which ones should be legitimized and then ensuring they are sustainably managed

- Concern that collaborative planning, where many people are involved, can bog down the trail approval process, with effort better focused on ensuring trail builders, users and managers have a full awareness of possible impacts of a trail
- It was also noted that this may be a higher priority where there are user conflicts and land use issues, but where these are not significant, letting small local user groups develop trail plans for approval/disapproval should be sufficient

Comments indicating how this action can be better described included:

- Reword: “Collaboratively develop provincial and local trail system plans that secure *balanced* opportunities for all trail users *and other related interests, including private land owners and users of Crown land.*”
- Add reference to the environment such as: “...*provided that sensitive natural environments and habitats are respected and protected*”; “*While respecting sensitive environments and habitats, ...*”; or “...for all trail users *and wildlife...*”
- Add: “...*high quality opportunities...*”
- Add: integrate support for local planning within provincial plan
- Highlight “all”
- Change the word “all” to “a variety”
- Split provincial and local plans into separate functions
- Include 4X4 vehicle use

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- Concern that outcomes of collaborative planning could either result in the motorized users having access to all trails; that motorized users could be inappropriately excluded from the process; that the outcome of planning could result in having access blocked from multi-use trails with little justification
- There needs to be a provincial ‘champion’ to provide leadership and support to make this happen, and that local governments will required assistance from the province with input from local user groups to develop a local trail system plan
- Concern that the process could get mired in committees; that for certain user groups that are not well organized it is important their views get heard
- Need to ensure at the outset of process that: (i) opportunities for all trail users does not mean all users can use all trails; and (ii) destructive uses will not be sanctioned

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- First Nations noted that they did not participate in LRMPs as they viewed this as a stakeholder process and not a government-to-government process
- First Nations comment that it is important to undertake trail planning and consultation processes that are specific to each First Nations territory
- Comprehensive process needed that involves First Nations and other resource groups

- Need to reference other resource users who use the resource so as to ensure compatibility
- As worded, this could create false expectations as we may need to set some boundaries in the context of existing tenure holder rights and existing legislation
- Trail planning should include discussion of appropriate management practices with affected suppliers and drinking water officers prior to implementation as part of on-going stakeholder engagement
- Concern about trails in or near Agricultural Land Reserve. Need to work with the farming community to get other issues on the table
- Concern that there has been strong community support for recreation access planning (e.g. Bulkley area) but there has been no provincial government support to complete this work
- Need to address carrying capacity
- Include: "...secure, *recognize and respect* opportunities..."
- How do regional districts get involved?
- How do you address the interest of people who don't reside in the area but are going to be coming there as tourists?

Proposed Action #2: Use appropriate legislative tools to approve trails in support of a comprehensive trail network

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 34% responded Very High
- 43% responded High
- 14% responded Moderate
- 9% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- Getting trails approved legitimizes and better protects those trails; enables enforceable rules to be applied to protect trails, user experiences and the environment; is needed to obtain funding or to invest in their management; and will better enable trail user groups to obtain liability insurance
- There was recognition expressed that we have many trails already in existence now that need to be identified; that we need to know and categorize what we have before we can address further trail needs
- The need for this action was also recognized due to many unauthorized trails being built; by shortening the time period from trail conception to completion perhaps more user groups will go through the approval process

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Concern was expressed that the legislative tools to approve trails are too restrictive; that there could be resistance if the necessary 'hoops' to be jumped

through are too onerous; and that it is important that the approval process be made very easy for local trail groups

- A comment also noted that the focus should be on existing trails given the many already out there versus new trails

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- Legislation should not be required to approve trails
- A legislative approach is counter-productive and a cooperative approach among caring volunteers and government employees works much better

Comments indicating how this action can be better described included:

- Add words “to designate allowable usage of, and to register” between the words “approve” and “trails”

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- Currently the system is not ‘user friendly’ when it comes to establishing recreation trails and securing management agreements. There are far too many different government agencies involved in the process.
- Frustration that the approval process is too lengthy and onerous thereby inadvertently encouraging the building of ‘illegal’ unauthorized trails. Simplify the process and more clubs and committees will be formed and more people will play by the rules.
- Concerns about unclear approval requirements regarding First Nations consultation, environmental protection and determination of what is ‘reasonably safe’; it was suggested that cooperation between the various agencies and First Nations in the development of the trail network is paramount so that the approval process becomes less arduous for local trail user groups
- The approval process must be made easy and designed to encourage user groups to be involved recognizing that trail builders and clubs are not ‘desk jockeys’; and that the process must result in a timely approval/disapproval decision

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Concern about the approval process closing trails and, if so, having a clearly defined appeal process
- Need to be clear that this process may lead to closing trails due to environmental or safety concerns
- Need to modify the *Occupiers Liability Act*, enact Inherent Risk Legislation, and introduce ORV legislation for licensing and registration
- Need to explain the term ‘established’ trail and stress the importance of this, for example, in being able to provide objectives that protect the trail
- Concerned about previously established trails being de-listed
- Need to make sure that legislation will address dedication of trails where land density is being changed.
- Make clear the expectation of whether a trail can be logged or not

- Importance of working with First Nations to demonstrate benefits of trails and to get them recognized in agreements; otherwise there is a concern that existing trails could be lost via treaty negotiations
- The need for local government approval to ensure that there is community support for a proposal with recognition that this can take time but is nevertheless necessary to ensure due diligence
- Importance that other resource users' tenure rights be respected
- That permits authorizing trails include requirements to address invasive plants
- That an approved trail on public or private land needs to be better secured

6. Good Governance

Proposed Action #3: Develop a communication and education strategy to better inform trail users about the existing governance framework

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 26% responded Very High
- 32% responded High
- 26% responded Moderate
- 15% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- Importance in providing a clearer understanding of the existing framework so that everyone is on the same page, knows what to expect and what is expected; by understanding the framework that there will be a greater level of respect among users toward the environment and the consequences of our actions upon it; that this is essential to increasing responsible use; and that this will encourage users to legally construct and manage trails and decrease illegal trail activities
- Education was recognized as one of the best tools for effective change/action and key to the success of the Strategy; that education can correct ignorance and that ignorance of the rules leads to user conflicts; and that it is important that users be made aware of the rules before enforcement is taken
- It was noted that most users/builders/volunteer groups do not have a good understanding of how the use of Crown land is governed; club executives, etc tend to, but not the average everyday trail user or maintenance volunteer
- Easier access to information about the governance structure was viewed as a way to increase volunteerism provided that the framework is not too complicated, restrictive and time-consuming
- There are others out there building illegal trail without knowledge of standards, best practices, environmental impacts, etc; to educate these individuals is key to the success of the Strategy

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Recognition that understanding the framework would be important for organized groups of trail users and trail builders/maintainers
- The framework is complex and confusing
- It is important to distill the essence of trail-related legislation and make it simple and comprehensible to all

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- The system is not ‘user friendly’ and therefore the system should be simplified before developing a communication and education strategy to inform trail users about the framework i.e. that good governance is needed first
- The vast majority of trail users and builders are well aware of environmental issues and potential impacts; they are also aware of the proper channels and processes that must be followed to ‘legally’ build a trail. However it is this knowledge of the extensive administrative effort and process that in most cases results in trail building done ‘in secret’ as ‘rogue builders’ in an underground movement.
- Most trail users lack interest in understanding the ‘governance framework’ – that they leave that to club leaders who already know this
- Government requires educating about the needs of local trail users because many land management agencies keep on transferring their employees into different areas before they are familiar with the area in which they work

Comments indicating how this action can be better described included:

- Add: “trail users *and land managers...*” (to include private land owners)
- Good governance could also be referred to as ‘rules of trail use’

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority. The most commonly cited one centered on the need for government to revise the regulatory framework before trying to communicate the governance framework; that the existing framework is broken and misunderstood by the enforcement agents and the general public; that it needs to be streamlined and simplified (e.g. too much policy and too many agencies to deal with); and because it is confusing and overwhelming, it pushes trail users/groups to building illegally.

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Need to stress importance of this action with respect to safety
- That there is a need to address conflict resolution as part of this proposed action
- Need to refer to *Drinking Water Protection Act* and/or BC Action Plan on Safe Drinking Water
- That related legislation like the *Weed Control Act* needs to be addressed to underscore requirements regarding noxious weed control
- That tenured resource use rights (e.g. forestry, ranching, *Land Act* tenures) need to be addressed as they have a bearing on existing and future trail networks

- That key rules like ‘pack it in, pack it out’ need to be stressed so that users don’t respond: “you didn’t say we couldn’t”
- Good governance of trails comes with well informed user groups, clearly defined uses, precise legislation regarding acceptable uses and levels of disturbance and enforcement. Our legislation is circuitous, unclear or non-existent (regarding licensing of ATVs), appropriate uses are often not clearly defined, environmental impact assessments are not conducted, monitors of trails and uses don’t exist, and enforcement is impossible.

Proposed Action #4: Improve legislation, regulations and policy to better manage motorized trail use

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

For those prioritizing the action:

- 64% responded Very High
- 31% responded High
- 5% responded Moderate
- No one responded Low

This was the highest rated action of the 17 proposed in the draft Strategy.

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- If any proposed provincial trail system is to be functional, it will require amending current legislation with regard to off-road vehicle (ORV) use
- A commonly cited improvement to legislation was the need to license ORVs so that they can be identified, with recognition that identification itself should encourage responsible use and better enable necessary enforcement action if it is required
- A number of respondents expressed support for the ORV Coalition recommendations concerning registration, licensing and management
- It was recognized that irresponsible motorized users can cause considerable environmental damage or impacts on other trail users; that this action would help reduce negative environmental impacts by specific motorized users not represented by responsible local clubs; and that disrespectful trail users in any group do harm to all trail users who wish to improve relationships with land managers and the public
- It was also recognized that improved management would better enable specific areas to be secured for motorized use, and would help reduce conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users
- Comments noted the need to regulate motorized trail use and to minimize environmental impacts and safety concerns - that address the current unregulated, unmanaged free-for-all which is not acceptable

- Some comments stressed the importance for improved enforcement while others felt that education is more important
- Various suggestions were offered about what should be addressed including the need to restrict motorized use in sensitive areas (e.g. to protect ecosystems at risk by amending the *Wildlife Act*); and to give local government the authority to regulate use within their boundaries (e.g. by amending the *Local Government Act*)

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Licensing will go a way towards regulation of irresponsible resident users who cause environmental damage, but its going to be pretty hard to stop tourists with powered recreation vehicles from doing the same
- Given the vastness of BC's outdoors that it will be a challenge to enforce regulations and therefore more focus needs to be placed on providing users with benefits for complying and applying peer user group pressure to act responsibly

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- Need to clearly define a C&E strategy that supports any new ORV regulations otherwise they will become 'lame duck' requirements that are destined to fail
- A related comment suggested that the legislation should clearly define non-compliance and be such that legal disputes over charges of non-compliance are minimized.

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Comment expressing opposition to ORV legislation
- ORV legislation is a concern if machines have to be registered and insurance as kids can not get insurance. This would impact ORV recreation trail use involving families.

Proposed Action #5: Enhance recreation opportunities by addressing liability issues

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 53% responded Very High
- 25% responded High
- 18% responded Moderate
- 4% responded Low

This was the third highest rated action of the 17 proposed in the draft Strategy.

The most cited reason why this action is a very high or high priority was the need for inherent risk legislation where trails users accept the potential risk of their own actions. Other related comments noted the need to strengthen the *Occupiers Liability Act* to place

more of the liability risk on the trail user and less on the landowner. It was noted by several who commented that if existing liability and insurance concerns can be addressed that:

- Opportunities for trail use will significantly increase particularly on private land if existing landowner liability concerns can be addressed
- Volunteerism and access to funding will increase leading to the success and growth of responsible local clubs and an improved trail system.

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Recognition that many trail organizations already have adequate insurance to protect volunteers and trail users
- That municipalities and regional district are protected under their municipal association insurance
- The present *Occupiers Liability Act* coupled with BC government provisions for liability insurance for registered stewardship groups likely provides sufficient protection
- The issue in general is likely driven more by perception than reality given the above and the relatively few litigious cases in BC

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority echoed some of the above noted points:

- That the provincial government self insures and municipal governments appear to have coverage
- Most groups have their own insurance policies to cover their activity. If individual trail users are uninsured then they should take responsibility and assume liability.

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Cost of insurance for volunteer stewardship is staggering. This is a real inhibitor to building and maintaining trails. Underscores need for legislative change to reduce risk
- Look into government providing core funding to support liability insurance coverage for the many varied volunteers and local clubs who support trails
- The province should be providing more liability protection to encourage rather than discourage stewardship
- Have the liability reside with the user/rider not the ORV or horse
- Requiring expensive insurance to be paid by volunteers will not work
- This issue is not just about safety but also about fire protection
- Need to acknowledge the risk and liabilities associated with impacts to drinking water quality

7. Sustainable Resources

Proposed Action #6: Provide a clear and up-to-date catalogue of various funding sources that can support trails

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 15% responded Very High
- 49% responded High
- 28% responded Moderate
- 8% responded Low

The most commonly cited reasons what this action is a very high or high priority was the recognition that:

- Funding is one of the top issues for trail user groups across the province and is sorely needed to support clubs and volunteers
- It is very difficult for local organizations to find funding sources and when they do it is challenging to complete grant applications
- It is frustrating to miss funding deadlines because they were not made clear; and that we may be losing out on time sensitive funding opportunities
- Without funding, trail planning/building/maintenance/management is difficult
- It would be good information to know the process for applying and eligible activities as well as funding sources
- The action seems like it would be fairly straightforward to implement and will help harness volunteer enthusiasm particular for smaller organizations who may not be ‘in the know’ as much as larger, well-organized groups

Comments indicating why the action is a moderate priority included:

- Recognition that a lot of information is already available
- That most groups already likely know this
- That there are not many sources of funding to be catalogued.
- It was also noted that funding sources readily change and that the ‘catalogue’ would quickly be out-of-date if it were not constantly up-dated; and in that regard if done it should be an informal catalogue that can be readily revised.

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority centered on the view that most groups already know how to get money from existing sources (i.e. instead we must look for new ways to get funding) since available funding sources are already quite accessible.

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- First Nations comment that the Environmental Youth Teams were a great way of helping youth and getting some good work done on trails. Government should

- review that program's success. Youth can build an appreciation of trails and environment. It is very important that youth be involved
- Need an explicit statement on programs and resourcing by various agencies
 - Need to simplify the process for applying for funds; would like to see 'one-stop shopping' for applications

Proposed Action #7: Develop a partnership approach to stable funding

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 13% responded Very High
- 55% responded High
- 22% responded Moderate
- 11% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included the need:

- For stable funding to support trail groups since most trails in BC are currently developed, managed and maintained by organized users and not-for-profit clubs in partnership with government – particularly if the goal is to have a world class trail system
- To promote accountability and encourage partnerships (e.g. with recreation equipment manufacturers)
- To maintain the trail building and maintenance expertise in organizations as these skills are threatened by the lack of sustainable funding
- To respond in a timely manner to projects, partnership funding sources (e.g. matching grants), and opportunities to secure access before land costs escalate

It was noted that BC has developed an unpaid volunteer search and rescue structure that is widely admired and emulated. Perhaps a lesson could be learned and applied from this experience to the provincial trails structure.

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Recognition that 'seed' funds, especially for small groups, is an important aid in obtaining funding from other sources
- That a trust fund is a good idea provided that it is controlled by trail user groups with no government interference
- Concern about any partnerships with motorsport manufacturers.

The main comments indicating why this action is a low priority was concern about a 'partnership' approach to stable funding. Views expressed here were that:

- Private involvement may either commercialize the experience, result in user fees being introduced, or public closures
- Partnerships with ORV manufacturers are not desirable

- Government alone should fund the trails since they are primarily on public land for public use.

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority with most centered around the ‘partnership’ concept. It was noted that certain types of partnerships may be resisted by some volunteers so it depends on who the partners are; that entering into partnerships cannot mean exclusive use; and that we don’t want to start seeing advertising billboards on trails.

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Concerned that BC Parks’ budget is inadequate and this deficiency needs to be addressed first
- Agree with funding innovative sources – gas tax, hotel tax, lotteries...
- Consider the notion of a trails season pass as revenue sources dedicated to trails since this has been done in other jurisdictions like Quebec and US
- How come the several successful models are not summarized and presented as a proposal?
- There can be conflicts in use of trails between volunteers and commercial recreation operators; the operators need to direct some compensation towards trail maintenance
- Commercial recreation operator commented that they pay government for tenure rights but this revenue does not flow into trails
- A huge impediment continues to be the difficulty of both local and provincial government agencies to be able to think in terms of partnership, despite being told this is how things need to be done. We continue to encounter a local or department focused mindset
- Better coordination of agencies would hopefully lead to more effective use of resources
- Need to explore other non-funding approaches e.g. use of local firefighters in early fire season may be able to do some trail work
- Active transportation and reduction of GHG would suggest complete and sufficient funding from BC government. Make this a priority budget item
- Beware of private/public partnerships. So often these turn out to be more costly and only benefit private companies that are in it for financial gain
- Provincially there is a need to introduce a surcharge on ORVs at the time of sale or annually as part of a licensing program; this would generate revenue for maintaining and managing trail networks.
- Stable funding needs to be directed at associated trail infrastructure like washrooms and huts
- Often government funds used to develop trails but trails fall quickly to disrepair due to no budgets for long-term sustainable maintenance. This would go a long way to limiting liability issues.

8. Effective Management

Proposed Action #8: Consolidate existing trail standards, guidelines and management tools, and ensure they are widely communicated and accessible for agency staff and user groups

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 23% responded Very High
- 39% responded High
- 29% responded Moderate
- 10% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- Promotes standards across all user groups. Improves quality of experience. Fosters trust between agencies and user groups, funding sources, etc. Promotes trails that will last into the future
- To avoid environmental damage, reduce liability issues, allow easier access to insurance, and reduce operating costs
- Makes it easier for groups involved with trails to understand all relevant legislation, regulations, guidelines and best management practices applicable to safety, planning, implementing, constructing, managing and maintaining trails. Understanding and awareness through education empowers people to do it right the first time
- More people would be willing to get into trail building and maintenance as volunteers if they knew where to start
- That there are excellent resources to draw from such as International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) standards for mountain bike trails
- Importance of having one standard and one code of conduct (trail etiquette) to be adopted and disseminated on webpage

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- It would be good for everyone to know the rules of engagement; and that a guidebook for design and development of trails would be a valuable tool
- These standards, guidelines and management tools need to be flexible and adaptable to each region and user group
- There are a lot of issues with ‘standards’. Setting standards that work for everyone is impossible and you should not consider that your focus. Sure, communicate what standards exist, but don’t push that on everyone.
- That stewardship groups have developed their own standards that work for their trails, and implementing different standards will not be well received
- The term ‘guidelines’ was suggested rather than ‘standards’ to connote greater flexibility in their use

- The view that there are many excellent and accessible documents (e.g. Tread Lightly) so use those if action is undertaken, and because so much exists already other actions are more important

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- Standards are already in place for user groups
- The issue of whose standard do you adopt
- Challenge of developing a standard to match the diversity of trails and community needs
- Concern that standards could impose requirements on volunteers that are too difficult to attain
- View other proposed actions are more important.

Comments indicating how this action can be better described included:

- Better describe as Trail Management Integration

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- Flexibility is required, guidelines are useful but should not be rules particularly when bearing in mind the wide variety of trails in the province
- Who is going to enforce those standards – government, users or is it ultimately the owners of those trails?

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Need to add to the discussion the importance of collaborative management with other parties
- Minimum levels of maintenance standards need to be supported
- Minimum trail standards and sanitation facilities are sadly lacking
- A consolidated trail standard for each type of trail from ATV, and bridle path to alpine route is a great idea. It gets back to the liability issue. Stewardship groups who purchase insurance then know what standard must be maintained to maintain their insurance
- Ensure that the trail standards and guidelines include the management of invasive plants and preventing spread of invasives
- Ensure all information is in a central location, easily accessed and updated in a timely manner
- Recognize that not all existing standards are good. Consolidate only the appropriate and positive standards

Proposed Action #9: Ensure the BC Trail Program is well integrated with interagency compliance and enforcement services

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 21% responded Very High
- 41% responded High
- 26% responded Moderate
- 12% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- To prevent environmental damage to the trails and off-trail areas, and adverse impacts on other users, by irresponsible users
- There is no sense in making rules if there are no consequences for non-compliance, or if there is no enforcement
- Consistent laws and enforcement is needed to change old habits
- There is a very small ‘rogue’ element of motorized users who are giving their activity a bad name so these people need to be identified and deterred from their irresponsible behavior
- This may be high ‘in the beginning’ until users are all aware of the regulations and follow them; afterwards it could drop in priority as hopefully problems will be minimized
- One aspect of particular importance to securing and maintaining access to private lands is assuring the landowner that violations of regulations, such as garbage dumping, environmental damage, etc, has an effective remedy
- A coordinated approach to enforcement will be required, and that enforcement services need to be providing a consistent message to trail users and those who do not comply with trail user regulations and rules

It was noted that:

- This will necessitate changes to ORV legislation and funding
- Efforts should focus first on compliance by notifying applicable user groups of unsafe or environmentally unsustainable conditions
- Currently there is little or no enforcement; and that penalties should be significant enough to be an effective deterrent otherwise we will be back to what we have now – ‘everybody doing whatever they want’

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Need to address other actions first like determining appropriate use (e.g. motorized/non-motorized) and signage and see how its going; C&E will be easier to implement when these other actions are in place

- There are not sufficient resources to staff an enforcement service; there is so little enforcement anyway that the action seems hollow; enforcement aspect must have teeth to make it effective
- Should focus instead on education, stewardship, local government support, ‘observe, record, report’
- There are only a few ‘problem trails’
- There are so many potentially different standards of trails and different agencies responsible for them that this would be a challenge

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- The users are the ears and eyes of the enforcement agencies. I do not see this changing in the future, as the enforcement agencies are too busy with other priorities
- C&E is perhaps lowest priority on a properly managed trail network covered by a trail management agreement
- Enforcement should not be a focus in the Strategy nor should funds be directed in this manner. Observe, record and report has been abused too many times and only encourages contention and does not resolve them
- There aren’t enough Parks people available for current needs

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- The difficulty will be in obtaining the manpower to provide C&E; who will pay for this; it doesn’t seem feasible
- That there has to be ‘buy-in’ from all parties regarding C&E
- Unclear what is going to be enforced? Agree with interagency compliance but not enforcement
- The enforcement agencies must have the same regulations and interpretation of those regulations to be effective. There must also be appropriate consequences for violations.

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- There is a problem in achieving enforcement if a land use plan is not legalized
- Volunteers are tired of enforcing uses – trail uses need to be collaboratively planned and then designated and signed, then public education – this will aid compliance
- If a trail is designated by a regional district then it may be possible to use local bylaw officers. But this raises the issue of whether this would represent a ‘download’ to local government
- If proper legislation is in place this will follow its natural course
- Need licensing of ORVs for observe, record, report and C&E to work
- The Observe, Record, Report alternative does have some hope of real enforcement
- Observe, Record and Report does not seem to be working

- Give people a chance to follow a rule before beating everyone up!
- If enforcement is to be effective, then penalties will be needed
- Not just well integrated but needs to be adequately funded
- Conservation Officers and RCMP are already unable to effectively police/monitor use of natural areas
- Trail user groups should be in charge of compliance (e.g. as trail wardens)
- The key issue is to outline what happens if a trail is not deemed a legitimate trail under the Strategy – how can the trail be officially removed

Proposed Action #10: Integrate recreation trail use into resource road decisions

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 31% responded Very High
- 45% responded High
- 17% responded Moderate
- 6% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- Resource roads are necessary for access; without road access, many trails will get very little use or maintenance
- Road access to many trailheads have been lost due to a lack of road maintenance or road deactivation, and in some cases resource roads have damaged trails
- It is imperative that resource users be made aware of the location of trails and that they be recognized and respected in their development plans
- Resource roads are a major source of motorized recreation trails. They are hard surfaced with low environmental impact and have existing structures in place that prevent erosion and satisfy the needs of environmentalists and other user groups
- The classification of backcountry roads must take into consideration the motorized recreational users of these roads when they are categorized
- To the extent possible, given safety and liability concerns, motorized users should use decommissioned or seldom used resource extraction/industrial access roads
- Resource roads area are already a de facto major part of the unofficial trail system, enhancing their incorporation into the official system will be very helpful
- It sometimes seems that measures are taken (e.g. removal of bridges and culverts) to specifically impede access to trails when roads are deactivated. This is a major waste of resources. They should be deactivated in a manner as to allow use by authorized trail users
- There should be opportunities for recreation groups to take on road monitoring responsibilities (checking and clearing culverts, etc) where roads would otherwise be deactivated

- For some areas there may be a need to have very tightly controlled roads to protect wildlife and habitat, and to provide walk-in backcountry experiences e.g. to lakes for fishing
- It is important that road dedication be maintained to allow access to parks
- Many trail networks are accessed by Forest Service Roads and funds should be dedicated towards maintaining this access
- Resource road planning must consider recreational use; significant conflict could be created without proper integration with these decisions; a collaborative approach can yield efficiency of resources and expertise
- Public roads should also have a recreational component

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Resource road decisions already consider recreation values and generally do protect well-known trail systems. Need guidelines and greater collaboration but no major changes
- The cost of road maintenance is massive; given high costs in manpower and equipment this action may not be realistic
- Interface trail networks have a strong tourism value to regions and towns therefore the province and/or regional districts need to be consistent with road maintenance and access

Comment indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- The resource based industries are already accommodating recreation groups, and communicating their 'road use decisions' through existing requirements of road legislation and regulation

Comment indicating how this action can be better described included:

- Reword: Integrate recreation trail use into resource road decisions *and consider past and existing road decisions when developing and implementing the strategy*

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Concern that this Strategy implies MFR has the ability to provide/maintain access to non-designated 'high value' trails. Although it may be in the interest of the public and/or the Crown to maintain access to some/all of these trails, government needs to develop policy and legislation and provide the necessary funding to support this type of mandate
- The integration cannot occur without fairly extensive land use planning
- Access is important and the resource roads are part of an important infrastructure to greatly help with this. However, if these roads greatly increase access by ORVs into sensitive areas it becomes an issue
- Resource roads should be available to ATV users to keep them off non-motorized trails
- Currently there are many fragmented trails that start from, end at, or cross a Forest Service Road. Either legislation needs to be changed or many new trails need to be established to join the fragmented trails

- Trail/forest road tenure options need to be described including the potential for trail groups to apply for tenure over resource roads where industrial use is complete or not anticipated for some time
- Who will be responsible for resource road maintenance, liability related to these roads and how best to ensure that the roads can remain part of the recreational trail system
- It may be important to close roads to provide primitive backcountry opportunities and to protect wildlife
- Regional districts need to be involved with lobbying the province for opening resource roads to users
- Need to more formally address road-based trails, for example, Quebec's Route Verte has 3000 km of trails on roads and rail beds
- MOTI should be given a clear mandate to promote and fund alternative transportation
- We should encourage MOTI to create a land reserve for trails as transport corridors to ensure as railways are abandoned that they are preserved for trails until MOTI needs them for highways since a trail can always be built alongside and separate from a highway
- Is MOTI on-board to cover situations such as snow plowing trail parking lots that involve highways?

Proposed Action #11: Develop a 'best practices' approach to managing trails on private land

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 23% responded Very High
- 50% responded High
- 25% responded Moderate
- 1% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- Effort is needed into developing incentives for private land owners to allow access for trails
- Many near-urban areas will require this to be successfully resolved to ensure the integration and connectivity between urban and rural trail networks
- In some areas like southern Vancouver Island, the majority of the land is privately owned with minimal access; restricted access on private lands effectively blocks access to Crown land
- Access through private land is becoming a higher profile issue as landowners try to limit their liability or simply value their privacy

- Without something like a ‘best practices’ approach, where buy-in is sought from private landowners, critical trail links could be lost or new ones will be more difficult to achieve
- Developing ‘best practices’ should include forest industry and woodlot owners who own private land
- Making ‘best practices’ available to volunteers and organizations will improve the overall management of trails on private land
- Motorized recreation on private land is becoming more restrictive due to some who choose to exercise inappropriate use of ORVs. It is very apparent that the private landowners wish to work with organized bodies when considering access to their lands
- Private land owners need liabilities and compliance to regulation/enforcement issues addressed before there can a reasonable expectation of public access
- Trails that have been used for many years on private land should somehow be designated as Provincial Trails so that they may not be closed
- Managing trails on private land should remain in the landowners control, monitoring and enforcement. No incentives should be needed or offered.
- This must conclude in ‘win-win’ long-term agreements with rights extending in perpetuity (best-case scenario)

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- A number of agreements exist between local organized groups and private landowners. Provide templates based on existing agreements/covenants already negotiated
- Importance is high but will not likely be successful until liability and regulation/enforcement issues are settled
- Not convinced that this is a current deterrent to greater trail development and usage
- Right now we just avoid private property
- Great idea and I would expect that most landowners wouldn’t tolerate anything less

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- This is not really an issue in our area but we can understand how it could be important in other areas

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- When municipalities are developing subdivisions they should consider trails
- What about municipalities looking at a ‘no net loss’ for trails or using their 5% for parks as trails?
- Need to consider a dispute resolution guideline
- The availability of liability insurance is a major factor when private landowners are considering access. This type of coverage is normally available to organized clubs

- Private owner should not have to pay for the public using his land
- Excellent examples exist in other jurisdictions. Don't spend time reinventing the wheel.
- Need a provincial agency with an overall mandate to deal with trail issues on both Crown and private land. The present system where MTCA deals only with Crown land results in a fractured, uncoordinated approach
- Why don't you just make sure that you stay a good neighbor
- This is a difficult question. Respectful honest dialogue and collaboration with private land owners should be encouraged
- It was noted that there is a challenge of dealing with private forest land owners in some areas as ownership changes happened frequently
- Need to hear further details as to how tax relief could be provided under existing legislation for trails and if there are examples in other jurisdictions.
- While we recognize the importance of accessing private land in some circumstances we also understand that some local governments have had a challenge in accessing Crown land. This appears to be as big an issue for some members as does private land access
- Why ('best practices') just on private lands?
- Concern about the 'best practices' term; why not 'a reasonable approach'?
- Should consider 'right to roam' legislation
- Should review Scotland's *Land Reform Act 2004* regarding right to access most private lands
- Fire risk and the need for fire protection and fire fighting can be a big issue

9. Comprehensive Information

Proposed Action #12: Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of trails

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 29% responded Very High
- 44% responded High
- 23% responded Moderate
- 4% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- Need to know what you have before you can decide where to start adding/deleting/improving/managing, where trails need to connect to be part of network, what gaps in trail use opportunities exist, and what trails need to be protected and which ones can be marketed
- A comprehensive inventory would be very useful for tourism promotion/economic benefits; it should be readily accessible such as on the internet

- User groups require a complete inventory along with easy to read maps showing designated trail systems. This reduces conflicts and confusion and allows better enforcement. Should identify the current agreement holders of all management agreements for trails inventoried
- This will aid in determining roles and responsibilities of authorities. The inventory can assist trail users to police themselves if considering uses that are not consistent with local rules and regulations
- Need to assess the location of many trails through environmentally sensitive areas to see what remediation is possible or if the trail should be rerouted; an inventory of habitat and wildlife sensitivities should be part of this
- This can be considered a safety issue in that good mapping will help prevent users from getting lost, and it can expedite rescue efforts in cases of severe injury
- Must be done for trails on private lands, timber leases, etc to ensure that trail access through private property is maintained after the land is sold and developed
- This may keep trail users off private land if they know where the alternative trails are located on public land

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Having an inventory for planning purposes is a good idea
- This will be a challenging undertaking. Will be very difficult to attain
- We already have many local area guide books which provide excellent trail information. Also there are existing web sources
- A readily accessible inventory about existing trails can lead to overuse thereby causing maintenance issues
- There is the potential (perceived or otherwise) that the government will want to ‘take over’ trails that have been built and maintained by locals for their use. Trails should only be freely marketed if the builders/maintainers wish them to be
- Government could use the information gathered by various groups and then sell it without giving the money back into the program or group supplying the information

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- There are many trails in our area that are not necessarily good candidates for management agreements, and our club doesn’t have the capacity for taking on more trail agreements
- There are so many old logging roads and skid trails that exist, I do not think it possible to create an inventory. Also if you list it, it will be considered for use even if it is not available for use. Inventory only the trails you wish to maintain.
- Too much has been spent on this already

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- The suggestion to make trail maps available online may hurt key fundraising initiatives of some clubs. Many clubs rely on their map production/ sales to raise the majority of their operating funds

- Volunteer groups will need help with technology (to provide information on trails); there are so many trails 'out there' this will be formidable task
- Is there some way of ensuring that the inventory will not be corrupted or lost or made to vanish. We always seem to need a new inventory of trails as the old one was 'lost' or is 'out of date'
- Providing an accessible inventory for trails that are intended to be accessible to those not residing in the community is ok, but should not be done for trails primarily intended for use by the community
- In some areas there are many unauthorized trails on private or public land; creating an inventory can cause contention if they are included
- The process needs to be developed to assure people that by coming forward with trail information they are not going to be criticized or have the trails given to another group or even deactivated. Need a good answer to the question 'why should I tell you where the trails are?'

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Should First Nations trails for spiritual and subsistence uses be inventoried? This may be a huge workload for First Nations. Their location may be of a sensitive nature
- This would be of great assistance to those who are looking to travel/holiday in BC. As well it is imperative that this mapping show other resource uses (mining, forestry) in the area so that appropriate arrangements and mechanisms are in place to ensure there are no conflicts
- A comprehensive inventory is not achievable or even desirable. The province is most concerned with 'approved' trails, trails where an application to approve them has been made, potentially marketable trails or routes. That should be the inventory.
- This is important but can be overwhelming.
- Great for user, local organizations and development plans
- Share the onus on local and regional participation in assembling this inventory
- Involve all user groups – clubs and individuals
- Mixed view of action. Part of the beauty and diversity of BC trails is their non-management. I have some concerns that government will market and 'use' the trails but that it will be of no benefit to the community and trail builders and users
- Need to use the inventory as a means to educate public about appropriate low impact practices

Proposed Action #13: Undertake a comprehensive survey of trail users

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 14% responded Very High
- 33% responded High
- 33% responded Moderate
- 20% responded Low

Although this was rated high or very high by 47% of the respondents, this was the second lowest rated action of the 17 proposed in the draft Strategy.

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- To assess needs, determine trends, get feedback and monitor, measure outcomes, adaptively manage and to ensure success of trails program
- Without a good survey we can't get a good idea of public support for trail funding and designating trails for users; it can assist lobbying efforts once the true wishes of the actual population of user groups is known; a survey provides a valuable feedback opportunity; actual users have first-hand knowledge
- This will help to understand the needs of all user groups and individuals; this would reveal how large the interest is and increase the possibility of funding
- This is a fundamental piece of information as decisions related to the Strategy are made; is needed to help ensure the Strategy is fulfilling the needs of the many users; it should have happened prior to the development of the Strategy
- Probably good for political reasons to demonstrate use and economic benefits
- Will reveal what areas are in highest demand for different user groups; can assist in determining how best to allocate funding so it is most effectively used
- A survey on the ground will show who is using the trails; it must go beyond club members as only a small percentage of users are members of clubs
- It would be valuable to extend the survey beyond local use within the province and capture wider marketplace trends in trail use in Canada and internationally
- Survey information on trail use must be freely available to the resource sector to allow planning (e.g. schedule resource use during periods of low tourism use) and to do cost benefit analysis when conflict resolution is required
- Action should include ecological surveys to consider effects on wildlife

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- This information is necessary to ascertain the impacts of different types of users
- We already know all types of users use Crown land. The question is what type of experience do they expect on Trails in BC
- This being done to an extent already
- To obtain a true and complete comprehensive survey of trail users will be a very large undertaking as there are many individual and informal trail user groups; could be difficult to do accurately; if not accurate could provide misinformation
- How would this be done and what would the goal be?

- Helpful but not essential; while important it is not an urgent action; unless it can lead to funding (then rate higher)

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- Trail surveys quickly become outdated. They are expensive, and if not completed properly will not provide accurate information in regard to trail issues.
- Survey results could be manipulated by some user groups and may unduly influence planning
- This probably already has been done. Most people don't believe these make a difference or are cynical of why
- I am not convinced that for the cost and effort required to do this, a lot of new information will be obtained
- We have lots of surveys. Now is the time for real action
- Perhaps this can be left to academics rather than tying up government employees
- This is of course a good marketing tool but I believe that we have to better develop our trail infrastructure before we will know its effectiveness in attracting users. People need facilities to enjoy first
- This is not likely to be effective as it will capture the opinions of those engaged in providing for trails and not necessarily the public
- If applied to particular low use trails, fear survey will be used to make inappropriate decisions based on very few responses
- Concerned that completion of survey could be used as a stalling tactic that may delay implementation of key aspects of the Strategy

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- Need to get the correct proportion of users from this survey with no false over-representation from any one group
- People who are rogue trail users don't tend to complete surveys
- Level of use by a particular group should not dictate use. Preserving the environment, historical use, possible negative impacts should dictate
- Be careful of mis-information. Health benefits do not come from riding a motor. Ensure users are not biased.
- This is important but I would caution about excluding certain groups like 4X4's

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Need to include general population to ensure we understand urban and rural uses and also understand why kids use trails and why they don't
- I think this is an excellent idea! I would add that you need to capture non-resident (or out-of-province) opinion on issues....as I believe much of this Strategy is driven by the goal to bring more visitors to the province
- Information from a survey would be useful and informative for trail building groups. We need to collect information from out-of-province visitors
- There is a need to consult with user groups on what questions should be asked in this particular survey

- If this is undertaken, ensure a good survey design and delivery so one user group and one generation is not ‘over-surveyed’
- It is imperative that we have a good understanding of the level of trail use, type of trails, demand and where there are gaps in the supply before we begin to move ahead and develop trails that may or may not be needed
- Need to consider future trail users – not just current users

10. Strategic Marketing

Proposed Action #14: Undertake the development of a provincial trails marketing strategy

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 4% responded Very High
- 18% responded High
- 41% responded Moderate
- 37% responded Low

This was the lowest rated action of the 17 proposed in the draft Strategy.

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- A comprehensive marketing strategy is imperative for a world-class trail system in order to reach full potential of economic benefits
- This is essential in order to realize the true sustainable economic potential of well designed, constructed, and managed trails. They must attract use – this requires solid marketing and a comprehensive communications program to reach those markets
- More and better marketing equals more tourists and more money for trails
- This will be a key driver for the government to try to help generate economic activity for BC. I don’t think this program would be in motion unless there is a link to economic benefits to the province
- Particularly important in light of recent economic downturns and skyrocketing unemployment
- Helps direct what trail use is best to promote internationally so that trail development can be appropriately directed for tourism revenue generation
- Let’s move from a resource based economy that destroys the earth to one that celebrates it

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- You make it and they will come. Word of mouth. Yes it needs to be done but previous actions need to be addressed first
- The more information there is out there about trails, especially good trails, the more people will use them.

- Because of the current status of the economy
- This would be best applied to key tourist areas or areas where the benefits are clear
- Make funding available for local groups and individuals to produce trail guides and brochures
- BC is already very well known for its trail system. Many clubs already market trail information from their own websites. No need to re-invent the wheel if this is already in place
- Prior to any marketing strategy you need to know what you have. Not sure we actually know what assets we have or the condition the assets are in
- First there needs to be appropriate designations of allowable users and adequate maintenance programs in place so that the product is known before it is marketed
- Do not market until the product is ready for the marketplace (this includes trails, signage, rules, enforcement, capacity planning, etc). We are already creating a demand through events and photos which is creating havoc in our backcountry
- Only after the Strategy and trails are developed. Don't overload volunteers by marketing too much
- We want to build and maintain trails that the community uses and benefits from. We recognize that effective marketing of trails does increase local tourism revenues. However local community itself does not need to be marketed to
- It will take a significant amount of time to develop a trails network as envisioned here. Publicity and marketing plans would evolve in step with this progress
- Much trails use is free so won't help increase income from tourism. And don't take this as a suggestion to start charging for trail use!

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- We need a quality product first; we should fix the trails before we market them. Some areas are currently an embarrassment
- Make sure we have something to offer when marketing; once a viable, diversified, multi-user trail network is identified, planned and brought into reality, marketing can begin
- We should not be marketing the product until the funding and sustainability of the trails has been addressed, and acceptable trail agreements with the government are in place
- We need to resolve the user conflicts, ensure trails do not degrade environmental values, and have appropriate enforcement first; we cannot be inviting the world to come to BC to bicycle in quiet beauty as it will be ruined by the first dirt bike that comes along
- I have a lot of difficulty with making this all about economics and trying to turn BC into something for tourists and not for locals; private operators should not be taking advantage of public lands
- Do not want to see more users of the trails, but would like to see the existing users better educated and more environmentally responsible
- The draft Strategy describes the issue of there being a steady increase in demand for trails, yet at the same time seeks to push this demand higher through marketing. This makes no sense!

- Can not afford, let chambers of commerce do this in their areas as they will benefit, not taxpayers in general; marketing should not be part of a trail Strategy
- More important than marketing is provincial involvement in funding provincially significant trails
- This is the last priority and would be years away from being needed – well after addressing issues of liability, ORV legislation and massive upgrades to various trails. Get it right before you invite others to use it
- When the trails system is in place if it is for ‘economic development’ the tourism industry will promote it; build the trails first, do the marketing later
- Word of our great trails will spread quickly when the trails are properly maintained and an easy to navigate database of all trails exists. I think it is a waste of money to market trails through traditional print and video advertising

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- Before we could do anything of this nature we’d have to address the many issues described by the other actions
- The trails need to be available, secured and better marked first
- Need to generate interest and increase the number of potential trails supporters and maintainers

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Information gathered about BC’s trails system can be provided to tourism industry and agencies like Tourism BC who can effectively market what we have to offer. However we need to be cautious about over-promotion of potentially sensitive areas
- Local users must be involved when building a marketing plan
- First Nations comment that if you promote the trail people will come to the areas, and once they arrive they’ll visit some of the surrounding attractions and points of interest. The Strategy needs to network the various trails so the benefits are multiplied
- Prefer ‘promoting’ to ‘marketing’ as latter infers ‘user pay’ and/or private sector interest is advanced at expense of public interest
- Some of the monies received by communities from successful marketing need to be brought back into trail maintenance rather than depending on volunteers
- When we market trails, we attract commercial recreation and need to ensure process to approve commercial recreation tenures is rigorous and efficient so as to promote quality operators
- Need to involve youth (e.g. youth teams) and provide them with job opportunities
- Concern that raising tourism revenues could give undue focus on motorized use
- Concern that Strategy refers here to hiking trails and not so much to motorized trails
- Explore and promote development of destination cabins linked to backcountry trails like in other jurisdictions

- Marketing implies the value of the trails is in how much money they can make the province
- Only after the trails are properly completed
- Take a look at areas like the Hatfield/McCoy trails in Virginia to see the financial benefits of user friendly trails and the spinoff income to local communities that open their doors to trail users
- This has been mandated by the Premier – boost tourism revenues
- This needs to follow after basic inventory of trails, environmental impact assessments and public vision forums have occurred

11. Implementation

Proposed Action #15: Establish a provincial trail advisory body to provide advice on the implementation of the Trail Strategy and the BC Trails Program

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 20% responded Very High
- 43% responded High
- 25% responded Moderate
- 12% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- Stewardship groups are eager to get involved. This type of advisory body will help them feel more engaged in the process
- This would be particularly useful if it provided access to inter-agency concerns and could coordinate between government departments
- Nothing will be achieved without it; without this we can not make positive progress; Strategy won't happen without effective advocacy
- Everyone needs to be involved and talking to each other; make sure all user groups are represented; very important that there be input from all interested parties
- This is seen as an essential coordination activity if a trail system is to be achieved
- Since leadership is key to program success; without someone at the helm full-time, this project is going to go nowhere...
- Because this is a large scale program that will need a large amount of focus and the need for someone to be accountable to the implementation process
- It is essential that this be grown from the ground up, and is well networked with local and regional efforts
- A hierarchy or 'chain of command' is required so that groups and government agencies know who to contact when required
- This body could serve to provide a framework of policy/guidelines for more local or regional committees

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- If this is going to fly, someone's got to implement it. 'Buy-in' at the grassroots level will be essential
- It is a good idea in theory but sometimes these 'bodies' become dominated by one sector which can then be a problem. So much depends on the individuals and the make up of the body
- Include other resource sector groups – with all due respect, the government agencies that administer that use are not always the best party to speak for the actual users
- I think you first need a group to work on the implementation plan and get some commitment for funding their time or funding a coordinator. Seems like everyone involved on the Trails Strategy Committee is doing it on the side. Working on an implementation plan would be a higher priority
- Build on the Trails Strategy Committee
- Establish regional trail advisory bodies to provide advice
- This changes to high priority once ORV legislation is passed
- Advice is easy to get but getting the job done is more important

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- Make decisions. Be careful, this as described could result in a drain on club resources that are already stretched
- I do not think we need any more committees or board members to advise us on trails. We need more people actually working on trails and coordinating with local partners to keep trails open
- We do not need another advisory group to complicate the issue. Most communities have an advisory group in place.
- Keep it within inter-ministry responsibility as BC is too diverse and segmented to be effective under such a body
- I am not sure we need an advisory body once the policies have been set up
- Get trails in parks looked after first of all. Then move to the other trails
- Wait until the Strategy is improved
- Not sure if this couldn't be better handled by ORC?

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- Any provincial trail advisory body must include "equal representation" from the organized provincial not-for-profit groups throughout the province who represent those organizations currently directly involved in trail development, management and maintenance.
- Be careful that representation is balanced not just by types of users but also by number of users
- The make up of the group is critical. In addition to the various disciplines you need to recognize the various regions.

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Further discussion needed within UBCM as to what form the local government representation may take on the advisory body
- Trails advisory body must have balanced composition – including more user group representatives (than exists with TSC)
- Need cross country skiing representation on TSC
- There are too many interest groups. Government must appoint an Advisory Body – see National Trails Coalition for governance model.
- Must include representation of the naturalist and ranching communities
- Considering the necessity to implement regulatory changes to ORVs, the ORV Coalition should be represented
- Should specifically exclude representatives from the motorsports clubs
- Have mixed feelings – it always boils down to who is on the body and whether they truly represent the stakeholders
- May work, but bureaucratic; multi-layers of meetings and groups slow decision making and stop progress
- Agree but needs to be much more than ‘advisory’ and ‘collaborative’. Will require serious funding and increased staffing to provide meaningful assistance to volunteer groups and local government

Proposed Action #16: Encourage establishment of local or regional trail committees to support implementation and continuous improvement of the Trails Strategy

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 26% responded Very High
- 36% responded High
- 29% responded Moderate
- 10% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- It is essential to have an organization to drive and coordinate a comprehensive trails Strategy since the whole is out of scope for individual local groups
- The people who actually use the trails need to stay involved in the decision-making process; trail volunteers are at the core of any future system
- Regional committees comprised of government representatives and regional representatives from provincial not-for-profit organizations could monitor this process
- With a higher number of trails committees and clubs we would have fewer people building rogue trails which are not only illegal but often unsustainable
- Forums for sharing successes are always good; this provides essential coordination activity if a trail system is to be achieved

- This would reinforce existing regional committees where they already exist; where they do exist, we don't need added confusion and work load of trying to integrate yet another authority; let's evolve what we've already started
- Many communities have these committees in place
- To be successful, needs lots of buy-in by local organizations, groups, government, First Nations, etc
- Local input is required and local knowledge and familiarization is very important; local stakeholders have the most to gain since they are closest to the action
- Would imagine this is where the 'real' work and planning/consultation would get done
- It is at this level the Strategy will evolve into definitive plans, funding request, community involvement and action on the ground
- To have local contacts with a range of users; however it may not be necessary to have formal committees – loosely structured ad hoc groups may well be quite capable of accomplishing these objectives

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Seems like a good idea. Local support is helpful
- All of this will end up being a great deal of work for local user groups
- It is not clear to me who would participate and how that would look
- Committees must have appropriate and equal local representation
- Numerous local committees already exist. This may be able to support the Strategy without creation of new groups
- I can see this benefiting a lot of end users
- Don't make more committees

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- This may be a good idea but will require club resources, volunteers time is already committed to keep most clubs operating
- Our concern would be that there would be too many levels of bureaucracy
- These committees already exist under other organizations and outdoor clubs, so the existing volunteer base should be engaged rather than trying to set up more competing committees
- Many local groups already exist so just ask them for comments. We do not need more duplication
- Don't need more committees to advise us on trails; we need more people actually working on trails

Comments indicating how this action can be better described include:

- Encourage establishment of local or stakeholder liaison committees to provide regular support on implementation and continuous improvement of the Trails Strategy

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority included that this will be challenging to get consensus on designated trails and funding issues. The smaller the committee the better?

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- Local governments need to be represented on this committee to ensure that trail planning is linked to overall community planning objectives
- Concern that this action is described in such a manner that implies provincial agencies having to share authority with regional and local committees; need to stress that the committees' role is advisory
- Need to involve Interior Health drinking water officers
- The best way to encourage formation of these groups is through financial incentives.
- These committees should be set up through the regional districts and people who participate should be paid for their time
- Agree but have to go further than just providing 'encouragement'
- Often advisory groups close to lower mainland get formed that don't represent the regions across the province

Proposed Action #17: Develop an implementation plan that identifies specific timelines and responsibilities for implementing the Strategy

The Feedback Form asked respondents if this proposed action was a very high, high, moderate or low priority action – and why, and how the action can be better described. For those prioritizing the action:

- 24% responded Very High
- 39% responded High
- 19% responded Moderate
- 17% responded Low

Comments indicating why this action is a very high or high priority included:

- An essential component of any successful program and strategy. What? By Whom? By When?
- There should be goals, objectives and timelines; road maps and goals are a perfect way to move forward with a plan/project
- Need to identify who is responsible for what and how actions will be supported financially; it is important that the role of government agencies be clear
- Accountability and timelines essential to successful implementation and good project delivery; deadlines keep everyone honest
- Time elapsing without clear direction and activity can create frustration and undermine the process; we don't want to lose momentum
- The quicker this is implemented, the higher the interest level will remain; if implementation isn't done in a timely manner people will give up on the Strategy

- What gets measured gets done; failure to properly plan results in a failed plan; without a plan to implement the Strategy will be useless
- A good plan that is clearly communicated is key to bringing together the various parties involved in implementing a Trails Strategy

Comments indicating why this action is a moderate priority included:

- Clear and concise directions on who is responsible is needed to avoid duplication and conflict
- Timelines and milestones are needed on both sides (clubs and government) in order to move forward
- Timelines are good but unless they are enforceable with some strong sticks and carrots they will have no value
- I'd like to know we are working towards some concrete goals but the overall timeline is not that important to me

Comments indicating why this action is a low priority included:

- Often a lot of time is spent on these 'plans' and they are seldom followed. Often a lot of wasted time; how many of these documents do we need?
- This sounds like an excuse to defer action – we need to see some results
- Would rather see the time and money spent on implementing the high priority actions
- Set up overall Strategy, work out liability issues, use of private lands, ORV regulations – then work on an implementation plan
- It is a waste of time trying to develop timelines which are unrealistic. The Plan is simple, prevent loss of existing trails, encourage new trails, partner up with local groups to document and utilize their local trails
- This is unrealistic. Implementation depends on land use decisions and other factors not in the control of any agency including government. The best that can be managed is a planned vision, coordination and acquire on opportunity basis. However clear organization, objectives and delineated responsibilities is essential
- Timelines are not likely to be effective as other land use decisions will create or close opportunities for achieving trail systems.
- Use local groups with local knowledge who can identify realistic timelines and responsibilities

Comments of caution were offered by some who responded that this action is a very high or high priority including:

- But let's not get stuck with red tape
- Although the complexity of implementation and the lack of authority that MTCA currently has makes it unlikely that any realistic plan could actually be developed
- How is it that this initiative gets top priority while the ORV Coalition's recommendations have languished in various ministries for 3 years; yet the two initiatives are all but mirror images of each other in many respects
- The plan must include specific guaranteed government funding sources as well. This cannot be shoveled off to the already overworked volunteers

Other key messages received about this action from the meetings and other submissions that have not already been addressed above include:

- All parties involved in developing the trails Strategy need to be comfortable and supportive of the process, its timelines, and the level of commitment that is required on their part or the Strategy will not be successful
- A trails Strategy should be actually outlining the broad roles and responsibilities and broad means of delivery including funding
- Please ensure in the implementation plan we aim for some short term success to give us momentum. Don't be overly ambitious
- Need to start small and build on success. Develop and report on successful trail partnerships
- Don't spend too much time on this. A broad agenda is all that is needed to remind us where we are going but meeting timelines tends to be pie-in-the-sky for projects like this when we depend on so many variables that we cannot control
- It's going to depend on the money
- This should be an adaptive management process

12. Other Actions

The Feedback Form asked respondents if there were other actions that have not been mentioned that are a very high or high priority, and to describe what these are and why they are important.

Some comments were received that the draft Strategy did capture the key actions. More frequently suggestions were offered about proposed new actions. The following six action themes were cited most frequently:

- *Protection of the natural environment.* Fill in the huge void created by the draft Strategy ignoring the need to protect natural values and features. An environment assessment needs to be done for trail projects. Trails should not be inadvertently introduced to environmentally sensitive areas which should not be accessed by other than low impact uses. Due to environmental degradation, the carrying capacity of these areas needs to be assessed with enforceable limits on use before further damage is inflicted. Invasive plant management needs to be part of trail development and maintenance.
- *Implement ORV Coalition recommendations* including the licensing of ORVs
- *First Nations consultation* is critical. There is a need for a fundamental higher-level government-to-government agreement prior to implementation of the trail Strategy
- *Resolve conflicts between non-Motorized and motorized users.* Create dialogue between user groups to educate each other on their respective values; develop a plan for trails that consider separate designations and permitted shared designations; create education, compliance and enforcement mechanisms; and provide conflict resolution procedures
- *Public road/transportation interests.* Broaden mandate of MOTI to include bike lands or separate bike paths alongside important roads that connect communities.

Public access on areas adjacent to highways that are used for trail recreation particularly in winter. Find and promote public transportation to trailheads

- *Protection of other resource values and interests.* Protection of range values and range tenure holder interests; source water and drinking water protection; and similarly for other resource sectors such as forestry and trapping

Other suggested new actions included:

- Highest priority is sorting out the motorized and non-motorized issue
- There needs to be established a process of conflict resolution between user groups within the region
- It is important to classify trails
- Explore the idea of including single-use trails in the Strategy or at least non-motorized only trails
- Develop a program that addresses motorized use of TCT with regard to community tourism opportunities
- Education training for tourist information employees on importance of trails and what tourists want from trails
- Encouraging collaboration between adjoining jurisdictions (i.e. municipalities, regional districts, and provincial agencies such as parks) to promote and plan for connected trail systems linking their various jurisdictions
- Access must be legislated so that authorized trail users can use the existing trails through private property to the backcountry
- Protect Crown land for recreation and trail use
- Urban interface planning is high priority
- Need to address recreationists who see BC Crown lands as a free for all, for access and use without awareness or care. Lack of services, maintenance, communication, signage and respect has further deteriorated the backcountry and is creating a high degree of resident backlash towards these weekend warriors
- Address directly the proposed Resource Road Act
- Help legitimize clubs
- Given a major goal of the province is to reduce GHGs, recreational motorsports should be actively discouraged and banned from all recreational trails
- Incorporate marine and water trails. They are vital to BC

Other key messages received from the meetings and other submissions with focus on comments not already covered included:

- Need to include marine trails in Strategy
- Need Public Trust Doctrine for Access to the Sea to support marine trail use
- Waterways and lake trails are closely intertwined with terrestrial trails and should not be ignored
- Mushing (dog sledding) interests need to be considered (2)
- Political will is essential
- Make this a top priority for government
- Most concerned about the organizational strategy. Who will do what?
- To listen to all input and not dismiss any ideas that do not conform to your narrow view

- You have to look at this for each user group in each situation.
- Focus on regions where a trail system is well started and there is stakeholder and agency support
- Contact local clubs and groups and local government for input. Hold public meetings in each municipality
- Conduct all meetings on the basis of consensus so that all interests can give their input through mutual respect and understanding
- Need a good link to provincial and other guidelines for environmental protection so that environmentally sensitive areas are not disturbed in establishment of new trails
- Need to make sure that the ongoing process can evolve as information is received
- Have responsibility for own actions and trail use
- Work first on trails in BC parks!
- See where funding sources are coming from as we would like to get started on better managing our local motorcycle trails
- Horses should be placed firmly in the category of low impact users
- (1) accessibility concerns; (2) over-promotion concerns where environmental damage caused; (3) funding support will likely be necessary to support local governments

13. Other Ideas

The Feedback Form asked respondents what other ideas they have to improve the Trails Strategy for BC.

Several expressions of support for the Strategy and thanks were extended for effort to date were also provided. Some specific trail area issues were raised and a few in considerable detail.

Process ideas – developing Strategy

- That you consider each feedback form careful. If the submissions are altruistic, each one has several hours of research and thought invested, and is deserving of YOUR time in perusal
- Following compilation of formal submissions, form a panel with representatives from provincial organizations and trail agencies to develop a base Strategy and how to further implement these recommendations
- Expand principles to address conflict resolution
- Hold meaningful consultations. Meetings held not adequate for hearing views of Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island residents
- Why were there not more locations for public meetings?
- More open houses are needed
- Why the short time to January 31st for input?
- More specifics on the proposals needed
- The Strategy is ok but should have provided a series of definitive recommendations for NEXT STEP actions

Process ideas – once Strategy in place

- Very pleased to see a document like this coming from a higher level. The trails Strategy will only succeed if a consistent commitment is made by government to support the program through staff time
- Just keep things as simple and straightforward as possible
- An open channel of communication via online discussion forums so that all user groups can meet online
- Cross country skiers must be represented on Trails Strategy Committee
- I do not believe that a huge agency is needed or wanted. I believe that what is required is more of a central node approach linking the many organizations, providing standards, and making it easy to do much of what is written in the Strategy
- Suggests TSC use a collaborative consensus based approach to settle unresolved disputes regarding trail use/users
- Want document circulated to regional district
- This will take a smart change-mgt process and much education
- Circulate this material widely to motorized equipment dealers and motorized users magazines
- Good Strategy with very good ideas. For it to work need regional representation so entire province is consulted and attains buy-in
- Get more involved with non-motorized groups
- You need to support regional committees which will probably have different focuses

Motorized and non-motorized issue ideas

- I agree with the Strategy and glad to find need to separate motorized recreation from non-motorized on different trails; this is the essential element of a trails Strategy for this province
- Improve access for motorized use (e.g. rail beds, using FSRs, crossing highways)
- Build new trail infrastructure for ORV use to match their growing use and thus providing a valuable alternative to destructive incursion onto dedicated ski areas and other non-motorized trails
- Don't consider motorized trail use either healthy or green therefore see no reason to encourage the increased development of motorized trails
- Trails Strategy needs to be very clear and specific about motor sport use and plans for it.
- Concerns about motorized use on TCT supported by several comments
- Concern about motorized impacts on environment and shared trail use liability issues
- Disagree with basic vision of Strategy that intends to provide opportunities for all users; motorized trail use should not be promoted given GHG emissions and climate change concerns
- Document and feedback is skewed for your benefit. Too many motorized interests in Greenway system. This is nature not a noisy polluting racetrack or

amusement park. As a landowner I will not be adding any of my trails to a network system; you have given me no reason to do so

Environmental protection ideas

- Need to further address habitat preservation; humans are not the only stakeholders. Think long term
- Ensure the management of invasive plants is addressed in all relevant components of trail development and maintenance
- Need ‘we care’ and “Rocky Mtn heritage’ symbol for BC Tourism and recreation on Highway 1 to foster respect of our outdoors

Economic/tourism issue ideas

- Reduce emphasis on financial gain and increase it on being caretakers of the wilderness
- Reframe Strategy in terms of Super Natural quality of BC and reduce the emphasis of financial gain as a goal
- Stop trying to make money and push economic benefits
- Promote the activities done on trails
- Jobs can be had at all levels if this Strategy can be adopted
- In addition to this Strategy, MTCA needs to consider an ‘on road’ system of trails for residents and cycle tourists similar to the Vancouver Island Rotary Route

Trail management ideas

- Continue to streamline the process of legitimizing trails
- Utilize existing government resources for on the ground trail building and maintenance activities such as existing government field crews (forestry, firefighting) who are already equipped with tools and trucks, trained on environmental, safety and first aid, and are ready to build trails in urban and rural/remote settings
- Not all trails can be ‘fee for use’ trails. User fees can be developed for higher use and assess controlled areas.
- Parking and trail head signage is an issue for many trails
- Don’t overload volunteers
- Ensure ALL bicycle touring trails and commuter trails are properly constructed and are asphalt-paved
- Please pave the rail bed trails
- Signage – low impact practices
- The greater amount of resources that can be provided for trail users locally the better
- People using horses or ORVs on public lands should be required to carry liability insurance in case they accidentally injure other users
- Work first to improve BC Parks!
- Supportive of the work to develop draft Strategy. Summary of key issues raised:
 - Vision: needs to be clarified so it is clear about what the purpose is for developing the Strategy and what the implications of the Strategy will be

- Local determination: community understands what the needs and aspirations of their residents are and it is imperative that local governments be key players in determining those needs
- Conflict resolution process: need to provide this where there is conflict
- Access to land: draft focuses on private land but there is also issue of accessing Crown land. Local governments have indicated that in some cases it has been difficult to develop or expand their existing trail network due to the need to access additional Crown land
- Funding: need to be provided if initiative is to proceed
- Mapping: work needs to be done to get an accurate picture of the diversity of trails throughout the various regions of BC
- Identify best practices: Strategy would benefit from identifying some examples where there are extensive, well thought out trails strategies in place, the process undertaken by communities to get to that point and how the lessons learned can be shared with other jurisdictions

Separate Documents:

Appendix A: Feedback Received Using the Feedback Form

Appendix B: Feedback Received Without Use of Feedback Form

Appendix C: Information Session Meeting Notes