



**NS Trails – A Voice For All – Round 2 – Summary
February 2021**

Question 1: Trail Etiquette - How do we build a culture of trail etiquette and respectful trail behaviour?

Valley & South Shore Regions:

- Enforcement and education – providing people with info on appropriate trail etiquette, and enforcement to discourage negative behaviour.
- Clear guidelines/trail etiquette for NEW people using the trails
- Develop something like the skiers - A large sign, or several signs that are standardized and posted at key entry points of the trails.
- Education in schools – taking kids out on trails, winter vs summer safety, etc.
- Engage other users on the trail to increase their experience
- Involve trail users in trail maintenance/picking up litter & they'll respect the trail more
- Create videos on trail etiquette to share on social media
- Create a brochure on trail etiquette
- There should be a network where we let the public know what's being put into the trails/upkeep.
- Don't leave vandalism or trash lingering on trails.

Central & Fundy Regions:

- We started our own trails steward program to educate people, same as a trail warden but tailored to our situation.
- They should send us signage at the provincial level with catchy wording, so signs get read.
- Run a multimedia trail education campaign.
- Trails stewards have made a big difference – they post often about misbehaviours and good things.
- We send out a detailed monthly trails steward report. We make sure politicians get it, NS Trails gets it.
- Work with the RCMP. If there were a couple of fines handed out it might help, especially when it comes to motorized vehicles.
- We need personnel provided to enforce the rules. Putting up signage isn't going to do anything, because it's already up. Governments need to get on board with enforcement.
- Work with ATV groups, have them self-police. They need to be involved in safety.

Cape Breton & Highland Regions:

- Signage – a list of etiquette rules at the entrances.
- Celtic shores has a really good etiquette list.
- If you lead with “no” it can be less welcoming.
- We might want to look to best practices to how things were done with Leave No Trace.
- What about having different signs at intervals – when things come up. If we’re getting certain complaints. It gives a lot of flexibility.
- Could we start an outdoor recreation program in schools?
- Having face to face interactions with folks about trail etiquette has a huge impact on users because the points stick with them.

Question 2 - Regional Coordination - What could a regional coordination model achieve? What would that look like for you? How would it benefit you?

Valley & South Shore Regions:

- A place to share ideas on how to handle issues
- There’s a lack of new membership – need help recruiting people to help with maintenance, garbage pick up, trail development, etc.
- Need more volunteers – also need to make sure they don’t get burned out, which is part of the reason volunteers don’t want to get involved.
- Let people know about the different uses of the trails – events, trail walks, etc.
- Trail groups need increased representation
- Have trail groups making more decisions – that would help with the best use of our resources.
- Trail development should be done by the NSTF

Central & Fundy Regions:

- Streamline trail maintenance, management, etc. at a broader level. Explore ways of improving efficiency, planning, and process at a regional level.
- We formed an active transportation committee, and that worked out really well.
- If we want to develop this further, then we have to consider having a paid profession chief executive officer, on a regional basis, that can help coordinate things.
- Make the process of receiving funding/applying for grants easier/more streamlined.

Cape Breton & Highland Regions

- One size doesn’t fit all. There are different needs and different resources in each region.
- In Pictou we’ve successful in coordinating. We’ve included everyone from hikers to bikers to snowmobiles to ATVs, so we’re sitting around the table seeing our shared interests. Now we’re speaking with one voice instead of motorized and non-motorized.
- A trail coordinator is a good idea, but there are pitfalls – when people become dependent on

them, solutions start to revolve around the trail coordinator. Sometimes it's about putting resources in place.

- Huge need for trail coordination but maybe two of three municipalities could share support, depending on what the need is.

Final Thoughts

Valley & South Shore Regions:

- We're new at this game, but the concept of coordination and connectivity are important to us so great to hear those comments come up.
- I'm encouraged. I think we're moving in the right direction. This is the best move forward NS Trails has ever done.
- We all have the same issues and the same struggles. This has been extremely educational. Thanks!
- I'm used to working behind the scenes, but it's interesting to hear everyone's problems, and makes me feel like we're not alone. Lots of great ideas that will help our group moving forward.

Central & Fundy Regions:

- We need a formal place where we can go for information, how to apply for funding, what to expect in support from our funders, etc.
- We need to push for that regional support network, for regional trail volunteers within HRM, so we're all on the same page when it comes to our needs.
- From some of the comments early about stewardship and etiquette, the word that comes to mind is equitability and a balanced approach to more conversations.

Cape Breton & Highland Regions:

- Appreciate being part of the group and learning what's going on. These conversations highlight things we need to learn more about.
- Glad to hear the different perspectives and needs of the trail groups. Conversation shifting towards the need of trail coordination, but not for them to just become a work horse.