

Best Practices-Value of Public Trails

- Create walkable communities through collaborative and cooperative efforts
- Provide health benefits for all users
- Create green infrastructure, connecting people to nature and town centers
- Positive legacy left for future generations
- Economic and real estate benefits
- Preserve open space and habitat protection

Best Practices- Trail Planning

Common Landowners' Perspectives

- Mistrust of government
- Land trusts get “lumped” in with government
- Differing opinions between family members regarding use and disposition of land
- Landowner worries
 1. Trespassers
 2. Property damage
 3. Liability
 4. Fires
 5. Damaged roads
 6. Loss of property value
 7. Future restrictions on development

Best Practices- Trail Planning

Addressing Landowners Concerns

- Create organizational policy on public access, list of allowable uses on trail, and how trail rules will be enforced
- Trail users tend to stay on developed trails, if the trail is well designed and leads to a point of interest
 - Dedication of a public access easement in situation where public access may exist through prescriptive rights, but now has been interfered with by private development
 - Dedication of a public access easement will direct people to a designated trail corridor where public use can be better managed

Best Practices- Trail Planning

Property Damage, Fire, Roads

- More “eyes” on the trail to monitor behavior of users
- Well-designed Management Plan, Operation & Maintenance funding, and response system to complaints
- Management Plan should include monitoring schedule, regular maintenance, and trail-specific management responsibilities
 - May also include guidelines related to smoking on trail, hours of operation, seasonal closure due to sensitive species or underlying land use, parking, and signage

Best Practices-Trail Planning-Sample Design Criteria

- Design speed (to control for no motorized vehicles)
- Horizontal alignment
- Path width
- Graded shoulder width
- Grade
- Clearance from lateral obstructions
- Stopping sight distance
- Barriers/rails
- Vertical clearance
- Bridge & underpasses