The Value of Trails
An Ontario Provincial Perspective

Presentation to the
Bi-National Twin Sault’s Regional Collaboration Conference
By Carol Oitment, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
October 31, 2013
The Value of Trails
An Ontario Provincial Perspective

- Ontario Trails – Provincial Context
- Value of Ontario Trails
- Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013
- Challenges and Opportunities
Ontario Trails - Provincial Context

- Over 80,000 km of trail (2nd in Canada).
- 840 not-for-profit trail organizations plus government and private sector trail providers/managers.
- Land/water, motorized/non-motorized and urban/suburban/rural/remote trails.
- Trails for recreation, tourism and active transportation: walking, cycling, off-road, ATVing, motorcycling, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, snowmobiling, dog-sledding, mountain biking and 4X4 trail uses.
- 2007 - 53% of Ontario adults used trails. (1)
- Provincial investment of $80M+ 2009/10 to 2012/13.
Ontario Trails – Provincial Context

Organizational Chart

- National Trail Bodies
  - Canadian Federation of Trails
  - National Trails Coalition
  - National Roundtable Working Group
  - F-P/T Group on Trails

- Ontario Trails Council (OTC)

- Other External Partners - Municipalities, Not-for-Profits and Private Sector including regional trail organizations

- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) as lead ministry - the Ontario Trails Strategy

- Inter-ministerial Directors Working Group on Trails

- MTCS Trails Team

- Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee - Co-Chaired Assistant Deputy Minister & President of the OTC

- Other Government Partners - Agencies, Commissions, Regional Tourism Organizations etc.

- National Roundtable Working Group F-P/T Group on Trails
Value of Ontario Trails

Economic Benefits of Trails

- Active trail use helps to combat the economic burden of physical inactivity which was $3.4B in 2009 and the burden associated with obesity of $4.5B in 2009.\(^{(2)}\)

- Trails generate approximately $2B annually (i.e. snowmobiling $1.2B, ATVing $6.2M, horseback riding $578M, cycling $100M among others), create jobs, increase property values, attract investment and help avert costs associated with healthcare, transportation infrastructure and climate change mitigation.\(^{(3)}\)

- The Trans Canada Trail Ontario alone upon completion will generate an estimated $2.3B annually.\(^{(4)}\)

- The Tourism Competitiveness Study 2009 of the Ministry of Tourism called for investment in trails. Trails tourism is developing.\(^{(5)}\)

- Cycling tourism is booming. In 2010 approximately 2M Canadian visitors to Ontario cycled during their visit and spent $391M which was an 8% increase in spending over 2009.\(^{(6)}\)

- A study of Bloor Street in Toronto found that patrons arriving by bicycle or foot visit the most often and spend the most money per month.\(^{(7)}\)
Value of Ontario Trails Cont’d.

**Cultural/Heritage Benefits**

- Trails on abandoned rail lines and portage routes are often cultural/heritage assets in their own right.
- Trails help preserve and educate the public on local culture and heritage values (e.g. Boom Camp Trails).
- Cultural/heritage trail routes (e.g. Laura Secord Trail).

**Other Quality of Life Benefits of Trails**

- Social connectedness/interaction/inclusion, volunteerism, community building and community aesthetics/beautification.
- Trails connect communities with 234 involved with the snowmobile network, 140 with the Trans Canada Trail Ontario, 41 with the Waterfront Trail, 24 with the Bruce Trail, 14 with the Oak Ridges Trail and others.
Value of Ontario Trails Cont’d.

**Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Trails**
- Trail activities help combat chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and depression.(8)
- Activities enhance mental capital, mental wellbeing and brain health throughout life.(8)
- Physically active older adults enjoy improved functional independence, less risk of falls/fractures, protection from age related diseases, a reduced risk of age-related cognitive decline and a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.(9)
- Each additional kilometer walked per day is associated with 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity.(10)

**Environmental/Ecological Benefits of Trails**
- Trails contribute to environmental stewardship, the ecological integrity of sensitive landscapes and climate change mitigation.
- Active transportation (e.g. cycling and walking) helps reduce harmful emissions and contributes to cleaner air and reduced respiratory health issues.
- Toronto Public Health estimates that air pollution from traffic gives rise to about 440 premature deaths and 1,700 hospitalizations per year in the City of Toronto alone creating an economic impact of mortality of $2.2B per year (2007).(11)
- A number of studies identify ecosystem cost-saving benefits in Ontario (Credit River Study, Rouge Watershed etc.- Health, Prosperity and Sustainability: the Case for Green Infrastructure in Ontario by Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition and Ecojustice among other).
Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013

Pan/Parapan American Games 2015 Trails Legacy - $3.565M in trails
Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013

#CycleON – Ontario’s Cycling Strategy

- Ministry of Transportation (MTO) released #CycleON on August 30, 2013 as a government-wide strategy.

- 20-year vision to increase the number and safety of cyclists and establishes ambitious aspirational goals.

Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013

Provincial Standard for Recreational Trails, January 1, 2013 (Ministry of Economic, Trade and Employment)

- Amended the Integrated Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to include accessibility requirements for the Design of Public Spaces including recreational trails (e.g. minimum width of 1,000mm and consultative requirements).

- Compliance: Government of Ontario - January 1, 2015; public sector organizations - January 1, 2016; large private businesses/not-for-profit organizations (50+ employees) - January 1, 2017; and small private businesses/not-for-profit organizations (1-49 employees) by January 1, 2018.
Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013

**Strengthening Ontario Trails Strategy**

- Seeking input to help address trail issues and opportunities going forward.

- Hosting 5 Regional Trails Consultations in November – Thunder Bay, North Bay, Ottawa, Ingersoll and Toronto.

- Hosting 2 Aboriginal Engagement Sessions – Thunder Bay and Toronto.

- Posted a Discussion Paper on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry (Registry Number: 011-9565) for comment by groups and individuals until December 4, 2013.

- The outcome could range from a few key amendments to the existing strategy, to a new fully updated policy-based strategy or a new strategy that includes policy and legislative directions.
Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013

Ontario Children’s Outdoor Charter

- Ministry of Natural Resources in partnership with the Back to Nature Network

http://www.childrensoutdoorcharter.ca/

In Ontario, every child should have the opportunity to:
- Follow a trail
- Explore a park
- Harvest something to eat
- Swim in a lake
- Paddle a canoe
- Play in the snow
- Build an outdoor fort
- Walk a trail
- Camp under the stars
- Go fishing
- Observe plants and wildlife

...Or create an outdoor adventure
Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013

- Trails Tourism - Regional Approach to Tourism - 13 regions and 15 Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) - develop and deliver tourism destination management strategies to increase the number of visitors, length of stay and visitor spend within a tourism region - trails tourism is growing.

- Provide leadership in marketing, product development, workforce development and investment attraction. Trails tourism is growing interest (e.g. Northern Snowmobile Advisory Committee).
Ontario Government Trail Initiatives 2013

**Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport**
- Funding for a waterfront trail/park at Ontario Place (revitalization).
- The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership (OTMPC) promotes trails.
- $147,000 to the Canadian Council of Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors’ Council to study alternative funding models for motorized trails.
- Mapping trails through Ministry of Natural Resources 2005 to 2015 – by August 2013 more than 2,405 trailheads (representing over 35,359 km of trail) have been mapped; also 8,235 segments comprising 5,500 km of trails.
- $50,000 toward trails website improvement for the Ontario Trails Council.
- Influence trail-related legislation and policy across government e.g. Lake Simcoe Multi-Season Recreation Strategy, Provincial Policy Statement).

**Ministry of Transportation:**
- Snowmobile Trails Along the Provincial Highway Right-of-Way Policy.

**Ministry of the Environment**
- Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund supported trail projects 2012/13.

**Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**
- The Provincial Policy Statement update will include trails as a matter of provincial interest in municipal land-use planning.
Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges
- Definition of a Trail;
- Liability Concerns;
- Trespass Issues;
- Degradation of Public/Private Property;
- Securing Land for Trails in Public Domain;
- Financial Stability;
- Multi-Use Conflicts;
- Policy on Rails to Trails;
- Collaborative Planning with Transportation Corridors;
- Training;
- Research to better build the economic business case for trails etc.
Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunities

- Collaboration – health, education, environment, transportation, natural resources etc. - agendas align on nature/biodiversity, active transportation, active healthy communities (e.g. school travel), preserving remote values and economic opportunities.

- Trails Tourism – cross-border trails (Great Lakes Trail vision, Superior Hiking Trail, Voyageur/Trans Canada Trail), cycling (youth summit), coastal trails, motorcycle touring, water trails (Path of the Paddle), urban trails, the animated experience on the trail (Pan Am Path), remote experience = bridging economic/tourism and trails resources.
Challenges and Opportunities

- Niche market trails e.g. culinary trails, wine trails, cultural/heritage trails (Boom Camp trails, Laura Secord Trail), rail trails etc.

- Emerging study and research incorporating carrying capacity of landscapes and water bodies – also accounting for ecological, environmental, infrastructure and health cost savings.

- New Technologies.
Contact Information

Staff Contact Information for the Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division of MTCS

Anna Ilnyckyj, Director, Policy Branch: (416) 326-0825 or email anna.ilnyckyj@ontario.ca

Craig Stewart, Manager, Policy Branch (416) 326-4370 or email craig.stewart@ontario.ca

Carol Oitment, Policy Advisor, Policy Branch (416) 314-7205 or email carol.oitment@ontario.ca
Source Notes

3. The Canadian Trails Study A Comprehensive Analysis of Managed Trails and Trail Uses commissioned by the National Trails Coalition and prepared by Terrance J. Norman of Novus Consulting December 2010; 2007/08 Ontario Snowmobiling by the Numbers, prepared by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) (revised July 22, 2008); The Economic Benefits of Trails Trail Monitor 1, Go for Green.
6. Ministry of Transportation #CycleON, Ontario’s cycling strategy, August 30, 2011.
8. Biddle and Ekkekakis, 2005; Teychenne et al., 2008.
**Addendum 1: Members of the Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Stakeholders</th>
<th>Ministries/Agencies</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Ontario Trails Council;</td>
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<td>4. Disabilities Representative;</td>
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<td>5. Active Transportation Representative;</td>
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<td>7. Stewardship Representative;</td>
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<td>8. Conservation Ontario;</td>
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<td>9. Association of Municipalities of Ontario;</td>
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<td>10. Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters;</td>
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<td>11. Trails Study Unit, Trent University;</td>
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<td>12. Ontario Parks Association;</td>
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Ministries/Agencies

1. Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport;
2. Ministry of the Attorney General;
3. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing;
4. Ministry of Natural Resources;
5. Ministry of Transportation;
6. Ministry of Northern Development and Mines;
7. Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
8. Ministry of Rural Affairs;
9. Ministry of Finance;
10. Ministry of Infrastructure;
11. Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment;
12. Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration;
13. Ontario Provincial Police;
14. Ontario Heritage Trust; and
15. The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation.
## Addendum 2: MTCS Regional Tourism Consultants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Portfolio Assignment</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neil Coburn</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td></td>
<td>(416) 325-6055</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Neil.Coburn@ontario.ca">Neil.Coburn@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imran Chowdhary</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>(416) 326-5269</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Imran.Chowdhary@ontario.ca">Imran.Chowdhary@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Jones</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 1 - Southwest Ontario</td>
<td>(519) 973-6320</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Janet.Jones@ontario.ca">Janet.Jones@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Samson</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 2 - Niagara Falls and Wine County</td>
<td>(519) 650-2183</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Paul.Samson@ontario.ca">Paul.Samson@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Fallis</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 3 - Hamilton, Halton, Brant</td>
<td>(519) 873-4482</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Nancy.Fallis@ontario.ca">Nancy.Fallis@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Samson</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 4 - Huron, Perth, Waterloo, Wellington</td>
<td>(519) 650-2183</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Paul.Samson@ontario.ca">Paul.Samson@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Polgravia</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 5 - Greater Toronto Area</td>
<td>(416) 326-4819</td>
<td>Caroline. <a href="mailto:Polgravia@ontario.ca">Polgravia@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Polgravia</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 6 - York, Durham, Hills of Headwater</td>
<td>(416) 326-4819</td>
<td>Caroline. <a href="mailto:Polgravia@ontario.ca">Polgravia@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beverley Quirt</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 8 - Kawartha and Northumberland</td>
<td>(705) 755-5883</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Beverley.Quirt@ontario.ca">Beverley.Quirt@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair Harris</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 9 - South Eastern Ontario</td>
<td>(613) 531-5581</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Blair.Harris@ontario.ca">Blair.Harris@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathon Harris</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 10 - Ottawa and Countryside</td>
<td>(613) 742-3368</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jonathon.Harris@ontario.ca">Jonathon.Harris@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RTO 11 - Haliburton Highlands to the Ottawa Valley</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Hernando</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 12 - Muskoka, Parry Sound and Algonquim Park</td>
<td>(705) 646-0641</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Laura.Hernando@ontario.ca">Laura.Hernando@ontario.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schultze Gillian</td>
<td>Tourism Advisor</td>
<td>RTO 13 - Northern Ontario</td>
<td>(705) 564-7361</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Gillian.Schultze@ontario.ca">Gillian.Schultze@ontario.ca</a></td>
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## Addendum 3: Provincial and Key Regional Trail Organizations (sample contacts)

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario Trail Council (provincial umbrella for all trails)</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Patrick Connor, Executive Director</td>
<td>Tel: 613-389-7678 Cell 613-484-1140 Toll Free: 1-877-668-7245 Email: <a href="mailto:execdir@ontariotrails.on.ca">execdir@ontariotrails.on.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario Federation of Ontario Trail Riders</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Dave Grummett, Executive Director</td>
<td>Tel: 855-637-6387 Email: <a href="mailto:daveyg@oftr.ca">daveyg@oftr.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mountain Bike Association (Canada)</strong></td>
<td>Lorna Woolner, IMBA Canada, Executive Director</td>
<td>Tel: Local: (519) 772-6943 Toll-free: 1-855-255-4095 ext 101 Email: <a href="mailto:lorna@imba.com">lorna@imba.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC)</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Paul Shaughnessy, Executive Director</td>
<td>Tel: (705) 739-7669 Ext. 228 Email: <a href="mailto:pshaughnessy@ofsc.on.ca">pshaughnessy@ofsc.on.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Trans Canada Trail Ontario (TCTO)</strong></td>
<td>Ms. Melissa Pomeroy, General Manager</td>
<td>Tel: (613) 695-1413 Email: <a href="mailto:mpomeroy@tctrail.ca">mpomeroy@tctrail.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Ontario Equestrian Federation</strong></td>
<td>Ms. Dianne Graham, Executive Director</td>
<td>Tel: (905) 709-6545 Email: <a href="mailto:horse@horse.on.ca">horse@horse.on.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs (OFATV)</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Wayne Daub, Executive Director (E.D.)</td>
<td>Tel: (705) 812-1029 Email: <a href="mailto:wdaub@ofatv.org">wdaub@ofatv.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share the Road Cycling Coalition</strong></td>
<td>Ms. Eleanor McMahon, Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>Cell: (647) 201-2820 Email: <a href="mailto:info@sharetheroad.ca">info@sharetheroad.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hike Ontario (HO)</strong></td>
<td>President Bill Wilson (905) 277-4453 Tel: 1-800-894-7249 or 905-277-4453 Email: <a href="mailto:info@hikeontario.com">info@hikeontario.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Waterfront Regeneration Trust (Waterfront Trail)</strong></td>
<td>Ms. Marlaine Koehler, Executive Director</td>
<td>Tel: (416) 943-8080 Email: <a href="mailto:mk@wrtrust.com">mk@wrtrust.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voyageur Trail Association</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 20040 150 Churchill Blvd. Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada P6A 6W3 1-877-393-4003 Email: <a href="mailto:info2@voyageurtrail.ca">info2@voyageurtrail.ca</a></td>
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