

Strategic Recommendations: Updated January 22, 2008

The following draft recommendations are intended to guide strategic planning actions and have been developed in response to the 2007 Larch Hills Non-Winter Trail Use Study. The study has included direction from a multi-stakeholder advisory committee, an inventory of current trail use and conditions, meetings and correspondence with government land resource agencies, input from other stakeholders including local residents and woodlot licensees, monitoring of six trail registries throughout the summer and fall, interviews and tallies at the main Chalet Parking lot by the onsite custodian and volunteer assistance, and a public survey available both at the main Chalet Parking Lot and online.

The recommendations are divided into four categories and are listed in order of urgency for implementation:

- **Level 1 Priorities: Foundational Recommendations** are those that warrant immediate consideration by existing organizations with approved stewardship management responsibilities for the area, and/or are within the capacity of existing user groups and individuals to implement. Targeted time frame: immediate. Implement in 2008.
- **Level 2 Priorities: Building the Framework** are those that would advance the long-term recreational quality and environmental sustainability of summer trail use in the Larch Hills, but would also require new resources, stewardship management agreements, and assumption of responsibilities. These recommendations will require further partnerships and planning. Targeted time frame: 2-3 years (2008 – 2010.)
- **Level 3 Priorities: Enhanced Recommendations** are those that could significantly elevate the recreational values of the Larch Hills trail system for non-winter use, but will require additional resources of time, skill, and finances. Targeted time frame: 3 – 5+ years (2008 – 2013)
- **Level 4 Priorities: Regional Recommendations** are those that extend the implications of the Larch Hills study to other areas of the surrounding Shuswap and North Okanagan region, and build on the relationships established through multi-user cooperation. Targeted time frame: 2008 and on.

Level 1 Priorities: Foundational Recommendations

1. **Agree to continue working together** as recreational trail stewardship user groups and stakeholders. At minimum: draft a shared statement of intention together during this process.
2. **First priority be given in 2008 to habitat restoration** and prevention of further damage (including road work and culverts where appropriate)
3. **That permanent barriers to Bogs and destroyed trails be placed as soon as possible** following snow melt in the spring 2008, and that continued damage be monitored by club leadership and custodians. New damage to be reported immediately to MoE, MFR, and MTSA Rec Sites and Trails. MoE will prepare an incident report form.
4. **Maintain the Larch Hills Recreational Trails in a spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, and stewardship as a multi-use trail system in the non-winter months** based on the following Stewardship Priorities:
 - a. management of trails in a manner that will protect and conserve species and ecosystems
 - b. respect for the areas Nordic ski use and non-motorized trail history
 - c. quiet semi-wilderness natural trail experiences
 - d. appropriately designated non-technical touring trails for a variety of users
 - e. family outdoor recreation
 - f. trail use safety and security
5. **Designate non-winter trail use** as either multi-use, non-motorized use, and where appropriate, single use. As well, identify trails for non-winter closure due to environmental sensitivity or damage.
6. **Identify Environmental and Recreational Trail Quality Measures** that reflect the stewardship priorities and can be easily monitored. These would include Visual Quality, Noise Quality, Quality of Interaction between user groups, and Site and Trail disturbance. Variance beyond an acceptable level would initiate new consultation and adaptations to trail and site management.
7. **Commit to authorized coordination of current non-winter trail maintenance and new trail development** through the LHNS joint trail committee, MTSA Rec Sites and Trails, and BC Parks.
8. **Assemble a Safety and Security Committee to coordinate a risk management plan for the area**, including identification and removal of danger trees in intensive use areas in cooperation with MoE and MTSA Rec Sites and Trails, as applicable. Also includes management of speed, mitigating collisions, hazard awareness, theft and damage control, and user preparation.
9. **Seek trail rehabilitation project support** through the Ministry of Environment's Conservation Corps.
10. **Identify signature circuits** considered particularly good for specific user groups (e.g. Larch Hills Summit Circle for ATV touring, Lidstone Circuit for Equestrian)

11. **Commit to educating user group membership** about designated trail use, multi-use cooperation and trail use code of conduct, and coordination of all trail maintenance and new trail development through LHNS and MTSA Rec Sites and Trails.
12. **Seek contributions from existing user groups to prepare and print trail maps** for non-winter use (these signs would replace the winter signs during take down each spring)

Level 2 Priorities: Building the Framework

13. **Establish a multi-user stewardship group to coordinate non-winter recreational trail management in the Larch Hills** Functions would include:
 - a. approve final non-winter trail stewardship management plan and submit to MTSA
 - b. designate and sign trails,
 - c. coordinate supporting contributions from representative user groups,
 - d. restore trails where resources allow
 - e. coordinate non-winter trail maintenance amongst user groups,
 - f. and monitor, evaluate, and direct appropriate revisions,
14. **Obtain necessary liability insurance** to cover all organizations within the advisory prior to implementation of non-winter trail use enhancements. (Note: Provincial coverage through MTSA should be sufficient to cover this, along with each user group's respective insurance coverage. However, should additional insurance be required by LHNS for summer trail use due to inclusion of motorized use, it is recommended the partnering motorized recreational user groups share this cost.)
15. **Explore inclusion of trails crossing private woodlots south of Chalet Parking Lot** in non-winter trail insurance coverage in order to allow access. Otherwise access should be discouraged through signage.
16. **Seek contributions from existing user groups to prepare and post signs** for non-winter use (Note: some signs would be put in place when winter trail signs are taken down). Signs to include:
 - a. "Slow" and "Idle-only" at Chalet Parking lot, South Hub, Cec's Cabin, and Tom's Shelter.
 - b. Signs for motorized users: exit parking lot as soon as engine started; load up as soon as stopped. Idle engines within parking area. No donuts in parking lot.
 - c. "Parking" at Chalet
 - d. Sign: to deter people blocking entrance to trails in parking lot
 - e. "Stay on Designated Trails" at all entry points
 - f. Safety warnings on trails, including "Slow, Blind Corner, and Steep Hill"
 - g. Junction Map trail signs (to replace winter trail signs each spring) – consider using the new Shuswap Trail sign standards based on Provincial trail sign strategy.
 - h. Educational interpretive signage re: wetland protection, conservation, and BC Parks boundaries
 - i. Warning and penalties regarding habitat damage
 - j. "Wear Bright Colours" Hunting Season warning and educational signage (placed seasonally)
 - k. Background and contact information on the Larch Hills multiuse agreement
17. **Consider trailhead filters for designated use** on non-motorized and hike/cycle routes.(Stiles)

18. **Consider wooden rail fencing in main Chalet Parking Lot** to designate parking area and limit Chalet access.
19. **Place voluntary donations box at Chalet Parking Lot** with sign stating dollars used for ongoing trail maintenance, monitor of wetlands, signage, facilities, and maps.
20. **Consider trail sculpting and design enhancements** (weave around rocks, tree fall) to slow travel on narrow and steep trails. Intent: slow travel and reduce collision danger. (e.g. Catamount Canyon)

Level 3 Priorities: Enhanced Recommendations

21. **Consider identifying new purpose built single-track trails** to complete signature loops for non-motorized use (possibly snowshoe routes), and family recreational motorcycle trail use (Log Roller and Larch Ledge to loop with Catamount/Pileated). This will need further discussion by advisory in spring 2008.
22. **Work with Equestrian groups to consider option of Horse corrals and camping**, at the old Chalet site where corrals are currently placed. Note: this concept needs further research and planning with EQ users and MTSA Rec Sites and Trails. Could include fee for use.
23. **Explore concept of Trail Patrols** (See IMBA Mountain Bike Patrols) as option to enhance the monitor of summer trail use, in collaboration with Shuswap Trail Alliance regional efforts. Consider extending parameters to include horse, foot, and motor patrols.

Level 4 Priorities: Regional Recommendations

24. **Include Moonwalk and Rosemond Lake Rec Site access road** in overall trail management plan.
 - a. Request MFR and MTSA to take mitigating action on riparian damage due to mud bogging at Rosemond Lake
 - b. Clearly sign Mara Meadows Ecological Reserve and barrier access points.
 - c. Request MoE, MFR, and MTSA to consider a staging area further along Rosemond Lake FSR away from homes and Ecological Reserve.
 - d. Option: direct traffic to stage from Chalet Parking lot and access via Mara Connection. Intent: to reduce negative impact of parking and noise to Grandview Bench residents.
25. **Initiate a Regional Multi-Use Trail Planning Strategy** to, a) coordinate multi-use trail interests in other areas, b) ensure long-term health of regional trails, c) identify and affirm specialized use areas (e.g. Haines Creek = Technical Motorbike, Rubberhead = Freeride Mountain Bike), d) address mud bogging. (The Shuswap Trail Alliance is ready to advance this in collaboration with provincial ministries, other user groups, and regional districts.)

This paper is intended for discussion purposes only and does not imply final decision making on the part of any stakeholders. Your feedback is welcomed. Please send comments to Phil McIntyre-Paul at luminous@jetstream.net, mail c/o 3370 – 7 Ave SE, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 2C4, or call 250-804-1964.