2007 Land & Water Summit
Trail Design & Maintenance Clinic
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10:20 Welcome & Introductions

10:30 Bibliography of Resources & Expertise

10:35 Ten Trail Design & Maintenance Mistakes to Avoid

1. Keep your new trail project a secret.
   a. Don’t ask for permission to cross private property, or stumble into a landowner meeting poorly prepared.
   b. Keep your steering committee limited to your pals and insiders.
   c. Set no expectations in the community about trail benefits nor how the trail might be used.

2. Expect to design and build (or upgrade) your trail quickly and then relax for a few years.
   a. Expect your trail to proceed in a linear fashion, just the way you planned it.
   b. Ignore what you’ve heard about permits being needed for work around wetlands and watercourses.

3. When you lay out a trail route, ignore desire lines and sensitive landscape features.
   a. When you close a bootleg trail, be subtle.
   b. When you want to avoid vernal pools, threatened species habitat and erosive slopes, send mixed messages.

4. When it comes to handicapped accessibility, assume that:
   a. No disabled people will want to use your trail.
   b. An accessible trail is not worth the trouble and expense.
   c. You will never need accessible features!

5. Ignore your neighbors.
   a. Don’t bother to tell them about upcoming events.
   b. When you hear rumors about problems on private (or public) land, let the landowners work it out themselves.
   c. Assume that they know how much you appreciate their support and cooperation - don’t say thank you very often.
6. Build a path to Grandmother’s house.
   a. Buy a boatload of wood chips and spread them on the trail.
   b. Lay down logs for edging.
   c. Accessorize your trail with lightweight benches from your local garden center.

7. Make cheap, lightweight signs, and lots of ‘em.
   a. Expect them to last 10 years or more.
   b. Make a separate sign for every rule and begin each one with either Don’t or No.
   c. Maximize the type and minimize the images on your interpretive signs (known as a “book on a stick”).

8. Let volunteer trail work crews supervise themselves and hope for the best.
   a. Assume people with power tools know how to use them.
   b. Trust common sense to guide what volunteers do and their standards of quality.
   c. Schedule day-long trail work events.

9. Accept the attitude that I know The Right Way to all this stuff.
   a. During trail work days, let the man (and yes, I mean man) with the biggest ego take over.
   b. Ignore trail books and trail workshop announcements.
   c. Pay no attention to trail details during your travels.

10. In your meetings, just wing it.
    a. Don’t waste your time with agendas, work plans and keeping track of commitments.

11. BONUS MISTAKE: Cross your fingers and hope that trail user conflict will work itself out.

11:05 Trail Clinic Roundtable

11:30 Adjourn