Menu of Guiding Principles for Trail Planning & Design
Worksheet for a Workshop by John Monroe
National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program
Draft as of November 2, 2007

Intended (and Current) Types of Users, or Audiences

- Members only
- Neighborhood
- City, Town or Local
- Regional
- State-wide or national
- School groups on field trips
- Youth groups
- High school athletes
- Senior citizens

Intended (and Current) Uses

- Walking
- Baby walking
- Dog walking
- Hiking
- Running
- Birding
- *Plein-air* painting and drawing
- Mountain biking
- Horse riding
- Exercising or Parcourse
- Orienteering
- Letterboxing or Geo-caching
- ATVs
- Motorcycles
- BMX
- Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)
- Snowmobiling
- Cross-country skiing
- Other winter sports
Intended (and Current) Levels and Types of Activity

- Passive recreation: walking etc
- Community gathering place
- Exuberant play
- Field sports
- Meditation & stillness
- Nature study (e.g., college research)
- Performance events
- Competitive events
- Authorized teen hang-out
- Illicit partying
- Swimming
- Fishing
- Hunting

Intended (and Current) Impacts of People and Management Actions, or Conservation Values to Protect

- Zero
- Minimal
- Balance of multiple uses
- Restoration/mitigation of existing problems
- Elimination of invasive, exotic vegetation
- Restoration of riparian areas
- Restoration of habitat
- Reintroduction of species

Intended (and Current) Design Standards

- Open year-round
- Seasonal closures
- Wilderness
- Conservation restrictions to follow: land trust; municipal; regional; state; national
- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- Home-made benches and improvements
- Low-end furniture & accessories
- High-end furniture & jewelry
- Historic paths, trails and roads
- Bootleg trails
- Locally designed
- Professionally engineered
- Native stone
- Cast block
- Timber
- Lumber
- Recycled plastic “wood”

**Intended (and Current) Network Design & Density**
- Linear
- Spurs
- Looped
- Loop and spurs
- Web
- Sparse
- Widely spaced
- Dense
- Dense trails merge into open areas

**Intended (and Current) Drainage Patterns**
- Maintain or restore sheet flow across trails
- Broad-based dips
- Waterbars
- Turnpikes
- Culverts
- Bridges
- Avoid watercourses whenever possible
- Accommodate watercourses and riparian areas
Intended (and Current) Tread Surface(s)
- Natural, existing surface
- Mowed, grassy surface
- Wood chips **(eliminate as soon as possible!)**
- Hardened only when necessary
- Hardened throughout
- Stone dust
- Crushed stone
- Pavers or cobblestones
- Paved - impervious
- Paved - pervious

Intended (and Current) Signage
- None, or vague
- Trail map available on-site
- Interpretive brochure available on-site
- Trail map and information on website
- Confidence markers
- Loops and routes identified by name, icon, or color
- Interpretive signs
- Interpretive location markers
- Trailhead(s)
- Fully integrated signage system

Intended (and Current) Accessibility
- No improvements for accessibility
- Improvements made from parking area to first major trail obstacles
- Fully accessible trail loop
- Fully accessible trail system
- Interpretive trail for the sight-impaired
Intended (and Current) Sources of Labor
- Exclusively by volunteers
- Volunteers and contractors (for big jobs)
- Contractors or paid staff primarily
- In-kind donation by company or institution

Intended (and Current) Safety Standards
- Volunteer Trail Crews
  - Safety takes care of itself
  - Trail work is supervised unevenly and sometimes
  - Rigorous safety standards are part of every trail work event and celebration
- Police, fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
  - No provisions equipment and personnel
  - Pre-plans on file with police, fire and EMS
  - Physical access provided for police, fire and EMS
  - Search & Rescue drills held with public safety officials