

Worksheet #11 – Access to Your Property

Use this worksheet to minimize recreational impacts on your property and manage access to your lands.

Why should you be concerned?

- Access on your property is the key to its appreciation and use.
- Trails open an entire world of experience by allowing you, your family, friends, and perhaps even neighbours to see the changes to your land through the seasons.
- Trails can also increase the risk of trespass, cause erosion and introduce invasive species via vehicle wheels or hiking boots
- By following the guidelines in this section, you can design your trail system to provide access for management activities, monitoring and recreational activities, while minimizing negative impacts.

What can you do?

1. Plan trail systems to allow you easy access to areas of interest and a variety of cover types.
3. Design your trails according to the types of activities you plan to use them for. For example, trails for hiking will be narrower and more winding than those for logging or ATV use.
4. Minimize the number of trails you create.
5. Avoid building trails through sensitive areas on your property such as wet areas, rock outcroppings, sensitive vegetation like ferns or Trillium beds, or in steep areas.
6. When planning or building trails, keep tree removal to a minimum, especially at entrance and exit points where wind, light and rain can have significant impacts.
7. Maintain trails against erosion and rutting by installing water bars or culverts to direct water flow away from the trail.
8. Build simple bridges to cross streams and wet areas. Permits may be required for stream crossings.
9. Reduce unwanted trespassing by keeping your network of paths away from the outer boundaries of your land and by clearly identifying your property boundary.

Access to Your Property: How do you rate?

Rating	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating
BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT					

1 Boundary Identification

Property boundaries are identified using painted or plastic dots, 10 cm. in diameter or more, 4-6 ft above ground, and maintained yearly,

OR property boundaries have been blazed by a professional surveyor and are maintained,

OR property boundaries are identified via written signs (ie. No Trespassing), maintained yearly, and posted at regular intervals, 4-6 ft high.

Property boundaries are not identified along their length, but corners have survey markings (ie. iron bars) in place that have been enhanced with stakes that are more visible than the iron bars,

AND/OR flagging tape has been hung in places along the length of the property line.

Only iron bars denote property lines,

OR property boundaries are not known.

2 Permitted / Non-Permitted Activity Signage

If public access is permitted, a sign identifying permitted and non-permitted activities is posted at the approach to each ordinary point of access,

OR if access is granted to specific users, agreed upon terms are outlined in writing, signed and held by the property owner and beneficiaries.

tip

- Red boundary marking dots = entry is prohibited.
- Yellow dots = entry is permitted, but only for specific activities that are clearly signed.
- Green dots = unrestricted entry is permitted.

tip

Aluminum nails are the best hardware for attaching boundary signs to trees. Aluminum nails limit damage to machinery if the tree is ever sawn. Nails should be driven enough to secure the sign but not all the way into the tree. If you choose to paint your boundary dots / signs, use oil-based enamel paint.

No signage is posted and non-permitted activities occur against the property owner's wishes.

Topic	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating
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HUNTING

3	Hunting and Trapping	<p>You have a valid Outdoors Card, licence, tags and/or seals for the species of group of species you are hunting,</p> <p>AND you carry these documents with you in the field.</p>			<p><i>You are hunting or trapping without necessary licences or other documentation in your possession.*</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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MONITORING

4	Monitoring	<p>You seasonally monitor your property for vandalism, health, degradation, invasive species, and pests,</p> <p>AND you keep written records of your property.</p>	<p>You occasionally monitor your property for vandalism, health, degradation, invasive species, and pests,</p> <p>OR You regularly monitor your property, but do not keep written records.</p>	<p>Your property is not monitored for vandalism, health, degradation, invasive species, and pests, but it is visited regularly.</p>	<p>Your property is not monitored and rarely visited.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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tip

To prevent vandalism, or unauthorized access, monitor your property regularly

Hunters and trappers contribute approximately \$57 million a year to the management and conservation of Ontario's wildlife through license fees and royalties. These contributions benefit programs including biodiversity conservation, fish and wildlife rehabilitation, bear management, and enforcement.

Hunters, trappers and anglers also help biologists manage wildlife populations. Harvest information from hunters and trappers assists scientific research and helps biologists better understand and conserve wildlife.

* These conditions may violate provincial legislation or municipal by-laws.

Topic	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating	
TRAIL MANAGEMENT						
5 Trail Design and Layout <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>tip One way to increase your enjoyment of recreational trails is to work with your neighbours to create adjoining trail systems.</p> </div>	Trails are not built through wet or other sensitive areas, AND in creating the trail(s), tree removal is limited, AND trail width and layout is appropriate for intended uses, AND erosion is managed with water bars.	Trails avoid sensitive areas, AND few trees have been removed to build trail(s), AND trail width and layout is appropriate for intended uses.	The trail crosses some sensitive terrain such as Trillium beds, wetland edges and rock outcroppings, AND limited tree removal took place in their creation.	Trail width and layout are not appropriate for the trail's uses (ie.rutting and tree damage is caused by vehicles), AND/OR no trails are developed and activities follow different routes as the need arises, AND/OR several areas of trail are actively eroding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6 Trail Water Crossings	The number of water crossings are minimized, AND permits are obtained, AND crossings are designed to permit the trail's intended uses.	Any alterations, fill or construction around watercourses or wetlands require a permit. This includes installing culverts, building footings for log bridges and any other alterations to the stream banks for trail crossings. Contact your local Conservation Authority for advice and guidance when building water crossings.		Culverts, fill, or other alterations to the water crossing area are completed without the required permit.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7 Mowed Trails	Trails through fields are few and don't impact nesting wildlife, AND if creating new trails through fields, the first mowing is delayed until July to prevent harm to ground nesting birds.	Several trails are routed through fields. They are not heavily used, however, and do not impact nesting wildlife, AND mowing new trails is delayed until July.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>tip Dogs cause more livestock deaths than coyotes or wolves combined in Ontario. Be sure to keep control of your dogs, especially if there are any livestock on nearby farms</p> </div>		Many trails are routed through old fields and they are used heavily, such that they deter nesting wildlife, AND/OR mowing new trails is initiated before July.	<input type="checkbox"/>

* These conditions may violate provincial legislation or municipal by-laws.

Water Bars for Erosion Prevention

Simple water bars built into trails or lanes can prevent costly erosion repairs down the road.

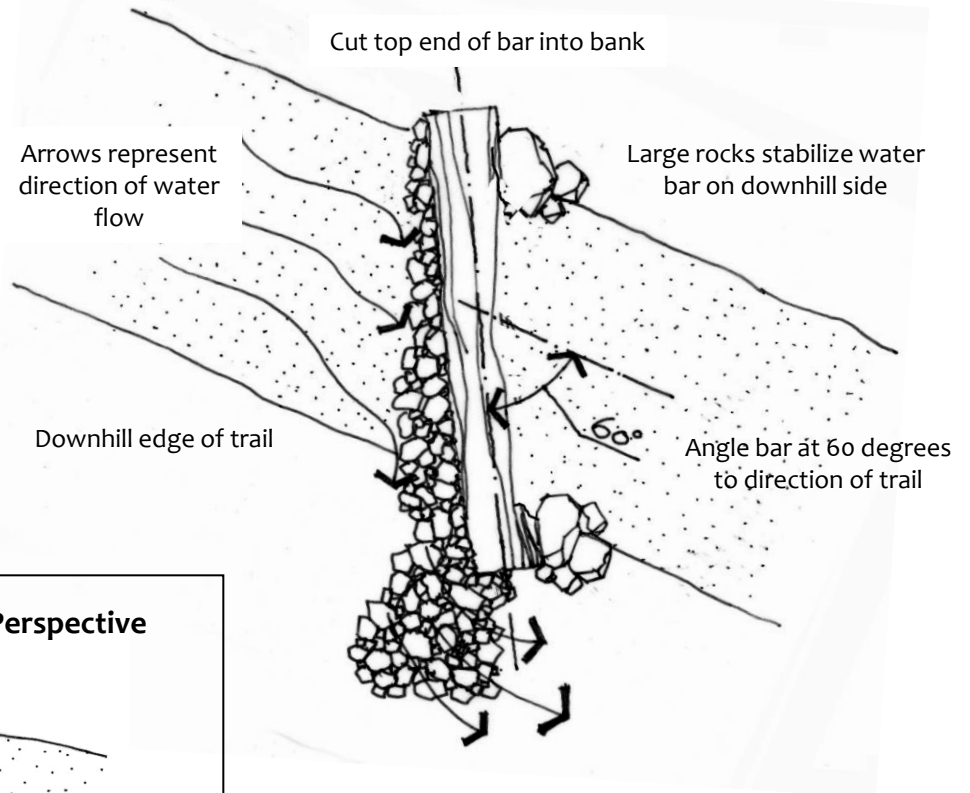
This diagram shows a simple design using a log and shallow trough lined with gravel. The water bar, angled down slope, directs water off the path and onto more erosion-resistant, vegetation-covered soils.

Be sure to make your water bar visible and keep the bar level with the ground on the downhill side, to prevent tripping.

Other designs can be found online or through the resources listed at the back of this worksheet.

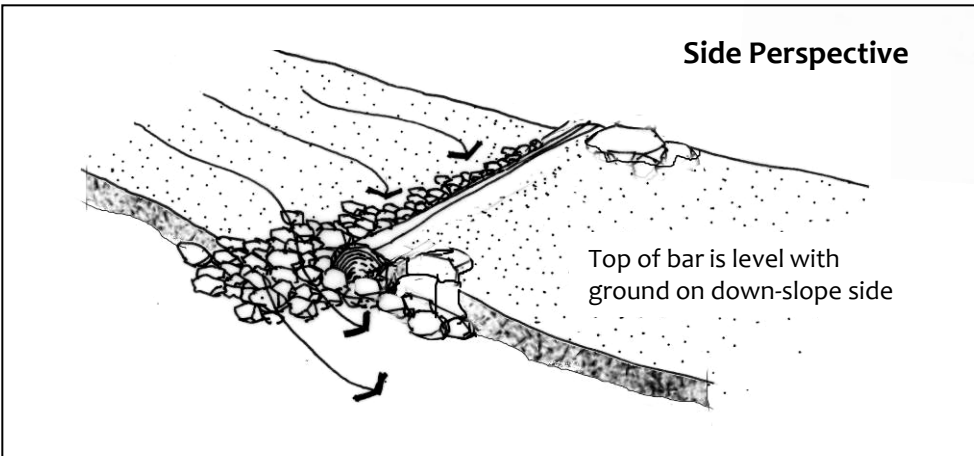
Have fun with your project!

Details in Bird's Eye View



Water is directed off trail; gravel dissipates the flow to prevent erosion downslope

Side Perspective



Top of bar is level with ground on down-slope side

Topic	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating
OFF-ROAD VEHICLES					
8 Off-Road Vehicle Use	<p>You stay on recognized off-road vehicle trails, pack out your litter, and ride in a way that limit your impact on trails,</p> <p>AND you minimize the noise from your vehicle by keeping your speed and engine rpm low and steady when approaching your neighbours' property.</p>	<p>You stay on a recognized trail system where off-road vehicles are permitted and practice riding behaviour that limits your impact on trails.</p>	<p>You stay on a recognized trail system where off-road vehicles are permitted but frequently ride after rains, in the early spring or during snowmelt,</p> <p>AND/OR your riding practices cause some rutting and erosion on your trails.</p>	<p>You ride throughout your lands with no trail system,</p> <p>AND/OR regularly ride through sensitive areas,</p> <p>AND/OR your activities cause widespread rutting and erosion.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Off-Road Vehicle Use

Many of the guidelines designed for riding on public lands are relevant to maintaining private trail systems. Below are a few points that will help you enjoy your trails responsibly.

- **Stay on a Trail:** This is the best way to minimize your impacts. Off-road vehicles should only be used on trails where they are expressly permitted. Off-trail causes compaction, disturbance, and can drive frost levels into the soil in late fall and early spring. Ruts caused in soft soil enhance erosion.
- When searching out scenic vistas or other points of interest, dismount and explore on foot. Keep your vehicle on the trail.
- Do not ride in sensitive areas such as stream banks, wetlands and hills. If it becomes necessary to cross a stream where there is no bridge, cross slowly at a right angle to the banks, at a location where the banks are stable and not too steep.
- Avoid riding on trails during or after heavy rains and snowmelt. Using your lowest gear on slopes will help to minimize erosion on wet trails.
- When riding, stay in the middle of the trail to avoid trail widening. Slow down on the corners to avoid rutting.
- Enjoy wildlife viewing opportunities, but avoid stressing animals. If you see deer, moose or other wildlife on the trail, stop and they will eventually amble off the trail. Avoid riding near the nesting sites of animals such as hawks, owls and nesting colonies of herons near wetlands.
- Take along a portable shovel; if you see reparable trail damage, stop and fix that hole or rut. A portable saw or chainsaw also helps remove downed trees; the removal of downed trees keeps people on the trail.
- For ATVs, check your tire pressure before each ride. Recommended tire pressure minimizes impact.

Adapted from ATV NatureWatch, www.atvnw.ca

Resources List

Access to Your Property

For more information...

American Trails

On-line resource about trail design and construction
americantrails.org/resources

Association of Ontario Land Surveyors

Boundaries and your land
aols.org

ATV NatureWatch

cohv.ca/safetynature.html

Book

Demrow, C. 1998. *Complete Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance*, 3rd Edition. Appalachian Mountain Club Books

Federation of Anglers and Hunters

ofah.org

Hike Ontario

hikeontario.com

Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs Ontario

ofatv.org

Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs

ofsc.on.ca/

ServiceOntario Publications

Ontario Trespass to Property Act
canadalegal.com/gosite.asp?s=1900