

### **What is a Greenway?**

Greenways are corridors of land recognized for their ability to connect people and places together. These ribbons of open space are located within linear corridors that are either natural, such as rivers and streams, or manmade, such as abandoned railroad beds and utility corridors.

Greenways, as vegetated buffers protect natural habitats, improve water quality and reduce the impacts of flooding in floodplain areas. Most greenways contain trails, which enhance existing recreational opportunities, provide routes for alternative transportation, and improve the overall quality of life in an area.

### **Who uses a Greenway?**

Greenway trails can be paved or unpaved, and can be designed to accommodate a variety of trail users, including bicyclists, walkers, hikers, joggers, skaters, horseback riders, and those confined to wheelchairs.

### **The benefits of Greenways**

Trails and greenways provide a variety of benefits that ultimately affect the sustainability of a region's economic, environmental, and social health. These benefits include:

- Creating value and generating economic activity
- Improving bicycle and pedestrian transportation
- Improving health through active living
- Clear skies, clean rivers, and protected wildlife
- Protecting people and property from flood damage
- Enhancing cultural awareness and community identity

This information was taken from: <http://www.greenways.com/benefits-of-greenways>

### **Background Snapshot**

After 25 years as the voice of greenway trails in the Province, the New Brunswick Trails Council ceased operation at the end of October 2019. In anticipation of the imminent closure of the organization and a potential gap in the services a group of trail stakeholders came together to organize a facilitated discussion to begin discussions on the future of greenways in New Brunswick. The intention of the discussion was not to presuppose the future of greenways, but rather to bring a diverse group of interested stakeholders to begin a discussion about a possible future direction based on needs and wants as well as addressing gaps in service and the changing landscape of trail development, promotion and advocacy.

With over 40 trail builders, advocates, managers, outfitters, volunteers and government staff gathered together on November 20, 2019 in Riverview, New Brunswick, Tanya Chapman of The Chapman Group

facilitated a 3 hour discussion about the future of greenways. The day was framed up with the following areas of discussion:

- Greenway Success in New Brunswick → Common Themes
- SOAR Analysis → Aspirations
- Identification of Stakeholders
- Action Planning → Priorities

### **Greenway Success in New Brunswick**

Negativity is a common mindset for people and organizations who are navigating an uncertain future. It is no different with this situation; emotions are running high and people tend to look at the bad, rather than celebrate the good. This exercise was focused on having the participants identify all of the successes- large or small, local, regional or provincial that occurred over the past 3 years.

It is clear from the list found in the Appendices section that there is A LOT of fantastic things happening with respect to greenway trails in New Brunswick. From this point the groups reviewed the complete list of successes and made an attempt to identify from the list those that had a similar theme. This resulted exercise resulted in this list of common themes.

#### Common Themes: Greenway Successes

This was then further refined as a group with the following main themes identified as a whole:

- There is a sophistication of knowledge throughout the province but no mechanism to share best practices (i.e. The Veloroute de la Peninsule has had a tremendous amount of success in the development of their project, but many groups were unaware of what was taking place)
- Quite a few unique partnerships are being developed across the province that have helped further trail development and usage
- Trails Action Plan: most groups indicated that this was positive, but that it needed to be enacted
- There is a significant amount of volunteerism taking place throughout the province in the development, maintenance and promotion of trails
- There is not enough promotion of the health benefits of trails
- There is not enough value placed on the potential of trail tourism to communities and regions
- Availability (or lack of awareness) of funding opportunities and how various funding programs are administered
- Most trails have stories to tell and groups have not been capitalizing on using the trail to tell the story of their regions and what makes them unique

These are the opportunities that the Greenway communities have to come together and work to ensure that we are better able to capitalize on them and work better together.

### **SOAR Analysis**

A SOAR Analysis is a common tool used for organizational strategic planning that focuses on the strengths of an organization or collective, rather than focusing on weaknesses and threats that can bog down a conversation about moving forward.

When conducting a SOAR analysis, the basic questions to be answered are:

- **Strengths:** What are our greatest strengths?
- **Opportunities:** What are our best opportunities?
- **Aspirations:** What is our preferred future?
- **Results:** What are the measurable results that will tell us we've achieved that vision of the future?

The focus of the SOAR Analysis during the Forum was the Aspirations and Results with a final general discussion on which results could be accomplished based on the collective opportunities identified.

<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Result</b>
Coordinated	Provincial Coordinator
Better Communication with Government bodies & landowners	Monthly Trail Planning Committee
Be known as a world leading destination for trails	10% increase in trail usage (tourists)
Meeting with stakeholders on an annual basis	Insurance Policy
A legislated non-motorized trails act	Legislative Assembly
Safety	Decrease trail accidents by 10%
Unified voice for non-vehicle trails	2 Greenway trail representatives in Government Trail Committee
Revised motor vehicle act	Increased Awareness (Ellen's Law)
Shared vision for all users	Increased networking opportunities
Standardized trail building standards/specifications	Provincial Standards
Centralized mapping of ALL trails	All mapping on a portal
Cooperation with motorized trail users	Engage them as stakeholders
Cultural Change → "Outdoor recreation linked to wellness"	Greenway legislation- adoption of government standard & funding
Increasing stakeholder group	Broader engagement and support
A shared identity (name)	Brand recognition
Shift in thinking about forests	Increase brand awareness on trails/forest
Trails are seen as part of tourism	Engaged tourism industry an usage
Mission, Vision → Core Values	100% recognition and alignment
Investment for trails: private and public sector	10% increase
Ability to tell "our" story in one unified voice (grassroots lobby)	Increase your brand (tell people what you are good at → elevator pitch)
Clearly understand the data on usage and support of trails	Better decision making and action planning

### **Action Planning**

So how do we take ALL of these ambitious aspirations and put them into action? In the short term, it is not possible. It is going to be very important to review these aspirations and remove (or put aside) those that are not entirely relevant at this point and add any other aspirations that may have been missed in the original exercise.

Once the priorities are identified; timelines, responsibilities and deliverables must be developed. Without clearly defining these items actions will get lost and work will not be completed in a timely manner. This will create challenges in keeping the momentum going in the development of defining what the needs of a greenway network are.

The following actions were identified by the various groups as priorities to investigate further in the development of a potential greenway network. The (numbers) mean the amount of times similar or the same responses were provided.

- Singular Voice/Greenway Organization (6)
- Identify Working Group (4)
- Best Practices Inventory
- Identify Financial Support
- Government Relations
- Create Mapping and Awareness
- Find a Trail Insurance Liability Policy that everyone can use (3)
- Create List of Stakeholders (2)
- Brand who “we” are- Mission, Vision, Values
- Organize Trail Building Workshop (longer term)
- Hold Regional Meetings to get further feedback

### Alignment of Stakeholders

Greenway trails are much more than simply those who build, manage and use the trails. Trails are extremely broad reaching and it is important to identify all potential stakeholders. Participants were asked to breakdown the stakeholders in the following categories:

- Core & Extended Team: Project team groups that require integration/communication
- High Impact Stakeholders: Impact will directly affect them
- Medium to Low Impact Stakeholders: Impact may have indirect effects
- External Stakeholders: Could include customers, clients, vendors, partners, community members, etc

Core & Extended	High Impact	Medium to Low Impact	External
Provincial Government (3)	Signature Trail Managers	Schools (2)	Accommodations
Hiking Associations	Outdoor Clubs	Health Services (2)	Restaurants
Cycling Associations	Economic Development Organizations	Community Partners	Special Population Users
Indigenous People Working Group	Municipalities (2)	Social Clubs	Trans Canada Trail
Regional Service Commission (3)	Tour Operators (2)	Conservation Organizations	Commerce (restaurants, stores, etc)
Major Landowners	Active Transportation	Environmental Organizations	Local Businesses (2)
Recreation NB	Trail Users (3)	Sporting goods stores	Residents
Trail Builders	Builders	Health & Wellness Organizations	Tourism Operators
	Maintenance Providers		Tourists

Signature Trail Managers (2) Trail Operators Trail Advocates Provincial Sport & Recreation Groups The people who attended the Greenway Forum	User Group organizations (4) Provincial Government Municipal Governments Corporate Sponsors Landowners (3) Funding Agencies Trans Canada Trail	HEPAC	Municipal and Provincial Government Schools
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\* The (numbers) mean the amount of times similar or the same responses were provided.

Although this doesn't neatly place the stakeholders in a particular category it is clear that there are some similarities in the observations of the groups at the Forum. This provides a good starting point in prioritizing potential stakeholders for present and future stages of the coordination of a potential greenway network.

Once the stakeholder groups have been "properly" categorized they can then be further defined. This is not by any means exhaustive, but for illustration purposes the following should be done if possible:

#### Provincial Government

- Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture
  - Sport and Recreation Branch
  - Tourism
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Department of Social Development
- Department of Public Safety

#### User Groups

- Velo NB
- Mountain Bike Atlantic
- Cross Country Ski NB
- Canoe/Kayak NB
- NB Equestrian Association

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Greenway Successes in New Brunswick**

- Trails Action Plan
- Completion (connection) of The Great Trail
- Local development → community “buy in” due to acknowledgement of the value of recreation and tourism
- Creation of trail coordinator position through regional service commission
- Partnerships for development and maintenance
- DNR- new budget for maintenance
- Increase of trail users and its effects on health and wellbeing
- Dialogue with First Nations has increased and incorporated their heritage and culture within these active corridors
- Community development in and around trails
- Riverview bike tour organization
- Trail Coordinator position through Regional Service Commission
- Tourism product is developed (substantial and with potential?)
- Expanded Sackville Waterfowl Park by 1/3 (plus trails) and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the park
- Extended trail in Cocagne to include seniors and students- also added benches. People have added small affirmation signs on the route
- Completion of the Mi’gmaq Trail running 150km from Mount Carleton to Bathurst
- New Park-Batisseurs in Atholville with trails for kids
- Establishment of Beech Hill Park Challenge- annual event in Sackville
- Groups in province more organized, looking at experiences, access point, etc- more strategy
- Fundy Hiking Trails Association: trail stewards, community engagement, education
- Connection of The Great Trail
- Veloroute: planning, vision, staff and community buy-in
- Trails Action Plan: economic impact and tourism potential
- Rockwood Park- Saint John Cycling/IMBA → 2000 volunteer hours per year building and maintaining trail
- Provincial Trails Action Plan
- “From surfaces to services”
- Concept of “Signature Trails”
- Increasing involvement of local communities in trail development
- Involvement of trail development with Regional Trail Commission
- Participation of community groups such as Kiwanis in St. Andrews in recreation development
- Report on economic benefits from NB Trails
- WOW: increased membership/engagement in outdoor pursuits and associated empowerment eg. Monitoring part of the Dobson Trail
- Starting association from scratch- Sentier Pluriel in Grand Digue. Use of private lands and meeting the needs of young and old
- Creation of Advocacy Director- Velo NB
- Ellen’s Law
- Increased number in Bouctouche Trails and linkages

- Sackville- Walker Road trail development and maintenance- Tantramar Outdoor Club organization
- Provincially- mostly inaction/regression. Lack of Leadership
- Fundy Hiking Trail Association supported by businesses, individuals and groups
- Diversity of stakeholders
- Fundy Biosphere “making trails count” (trail counting data)
- Media coverage, interest and support- general info
- TIF funding for trails network extension
- Networking via social media- engaging new members, volunteers, sharing trail info and amenities
- Fundy Hiking Trail Association recruiting new volunteers
- Establish of ancient portage trails
- Increase in number of people using trails... considered an important piece of infrastructure
- 8 regional consultants around province offering support through trail infrastructure program
- New Mountain biking and fat biking trails popping up around the province (white rock, sugarloaf & mill creek)
- ACOA and GNB funding trail town mission trips
- DTI authorized Veloroute for trail alignment and paving
- New Mountain Bike trail in Rogersville (brought the school in to work on it)
- Adding trails in Grand Digue and Cocgne
- Introduced new people to the pleasures of hiking and the outdoors
- FBR’s program “Amazing Places” has fostered an interest in visiting 50 of these places within the Biosphere
- Members of the Outdoor Enthusiasts have looked after various sections of the Dobson Trail and Fundy Footpath
- JDI has reached out to some trail groups to better formalize agreements
- Signature Trails: Mi’gmaq Trail, Veloroute, Coastal Link, Wolastoq Trail, Fundy Footpath
- Connection of the Great Trail
- Trails Action Plan
- Fundy National Park Trail Development
- Active Transportation Workshop
- Increase in appreciation of the value of trails
- Diversity of trail and trail design
- Events: ULTRA, Defi Nepisiguit, Tour 150, Elgin 100, Mountain Bike Atlantic, Coal Miners Lung, Ellen’s Tour, Atlantic Outdoor Forum
- Documents and Studies: Economic Impact Study by NB Trails, Regional Service Commission Recreation Studies and plans, Municipal efforts around AT Plans
- Integration of diverse expertise across community/local government/provincial government /federal
- Grassroots community mobilization around outdoor recreation
- Increase in programming around trails
- Increase in trail infrastructure
- Trails as “attractors” to our province
- “Showcasing” Place (storytelling to build on heritage of place)
- Growth of new sports/activities and resurgence of others (mountain bike and snowshoeing)

From this list the groups were then asked to find commonality amongst them:

#### Group A

- Increased community use and groups
- Increase and expansion of trail infrastructure
- Funding/Grants
- Regional Service Commission involvement and regional sport and recreation consultants → more money and effort to connect locally and regionally
- Trails Action Plan (Tourism, Heritage and Culture)

#### Group B

- Lots of local initiatives
- Wide diversity of trails and activities
- Increased local usage
- Wide range of governmental organizations but seemingly uncoordinated/lack of info dissemination re programs/support/resources
- Lots of partnerships (though not clear who partners are)

#### Group C

- Health and Wellness of population
- New and upgraded trails
- Diversity of stakeholders
- Volunteers (sweat equity and paying out of pocket)
- Regional Service Commission support
- Economic Impact benefits for communities
- Telling stories of people & places through trails

#### Group D

- Silos: scattered projects
- Community Engagement
- Community Trail Building
- Provincial, Municipal and Regional Service Commission coordination
- Economic Opportunity
- Linkage
- Media/Social Media appetite- strategy, training and heritage
- Veloroute

#### Group E

- Local community involvement in development of trails/role of province and regions for support
- How do you develop community capacity for trail development/maintenance?
- There is a richness of stories behind trails and New Brunswick's history that could be told better

#### Group F

- Plans for trails and trail development (more of them)
- Funding opportunities and grant programs
- Link to wellness and importance of trails

- Bike trails/Veloroutes
- Partnerships, connecting communities, regional coordination
- Increase in trail development and experiences
- First Nations dialogue and participation has increased

#### Group G

- Storytelling
- Community Engagement
- Tourism & Experience
- New Cycling Trails and Infrastructure
- Volunteering
- Promoting Health benefits
- Funding
- Networking

#### Group H

- Physical Trails/Trail Networks
  - Signature Trails
  - Diversity of Trails (walking trails, rail trails, MTB, Water, etc)
- Grassroots activities/movements
  - Program →
  - Formalized models →
  - Private sector involvement
- The sophistication of knowledge around trails
  - Documentation/Studies
  - Data collection/counters/surveys
  - Economic Impact & Health Benefits (mental and physical)
  - Trail Design (demographic focus, accessibility, etc)
- Role of “enablers”
  - Levels/different types of government
  - Social media
  - Grants/Investment/Funding
- Events

Working group: help the working group make decisions

Open ended question

Priority

Terms of reference