

Manitoba
Recreational

Trails Association

Newsletter



A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MRTA

On June 17th and 18th, the board of the MRTA met for a weekend strategic planning session in the Town of Neepawa. The Neepawa Resource Centre was the location for this event, and proved to be an excellent facility. Thanks to the Neepawa Resource Centre, and to the Neepawa Golf Course which provided the catering, and also to Monty Simon, President of the Neepawa Chamber of Commerce, who took care of many of the details in arranging this event.

The session was very ably facilitated/hosted by Judee Regan, of "World of Work." She led the board through a complex and intense process, with resulting goals and objectives that generated excitement and commitment in everyone. Our thanks go out to her, and also to Marjorie Sanford, who was able on very short notice to come to our aid with her secretarial skills. And, finally, thanks to all the board members who took time out of their weekend to attend the session.

On Friday afternoon, the session opened with an address from the chair, Terry Howard. He set the stage for the process that the board was about to undertake, noting that the session compressed what would normally take 2.5 days into 1.5 days. He then went on to suggest that the focus of the weekend be on three areas: board development, client management and public relations/advocacy.

The purpose of the planning session was to create a working environment which supports innovative opportunities and solutions that will guide the MRTA board to planning and creating a strategy for 2005-2006. The session took an appreciative enquiry approach, which include the following basic tenets:

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Introducing the Roblin Pavilion in Pictures



Trans Canada Trail Foundation Annual General Meeting: "10,000 km. Built, 8,000 km. to Go"

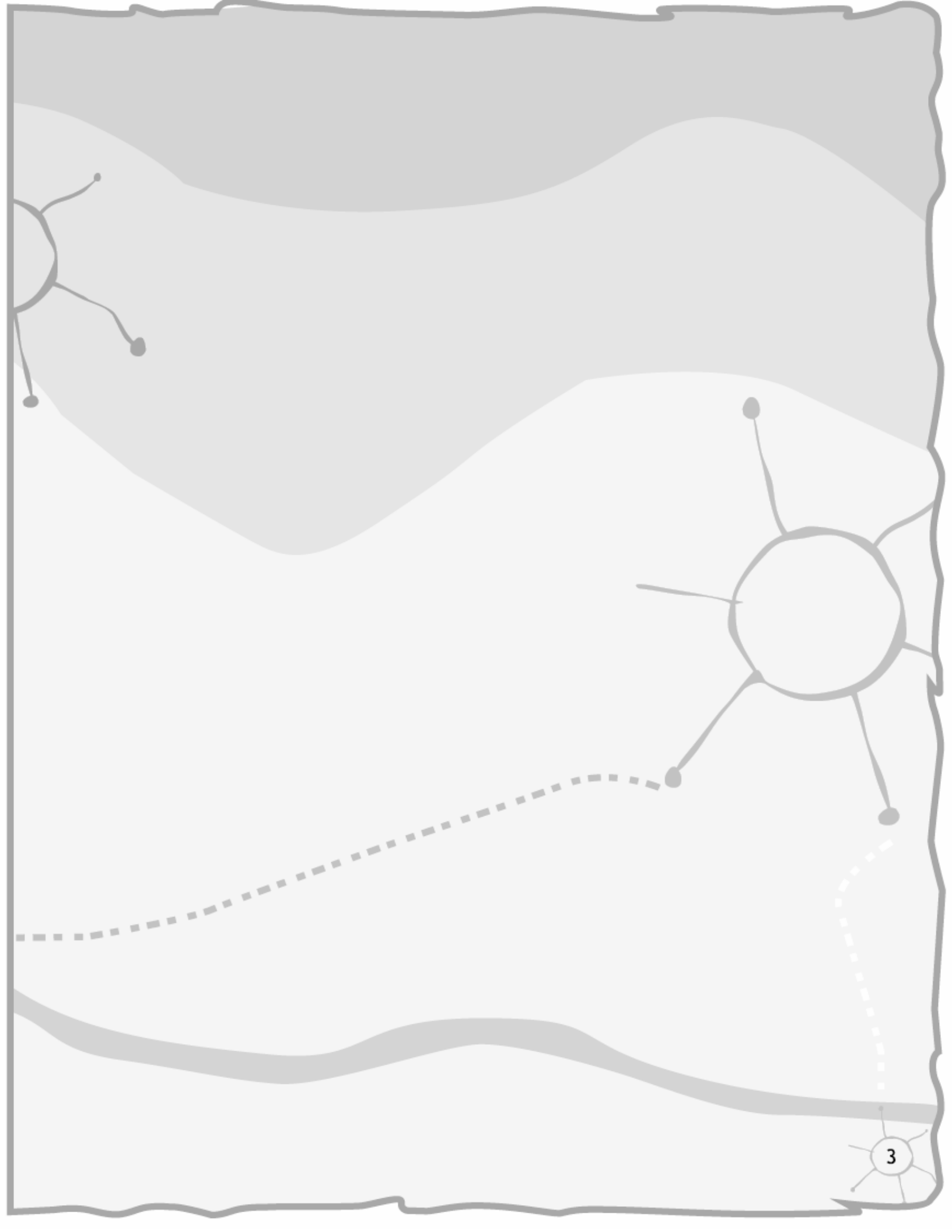
"10,000 km built, 8,000 km to Go" is the title of the Foundation's annual trail report for 2005. This year's annual report from the Foundation (available in full on their website www.tctrail.ca) focuses on substantial completion of the TCT by 2010. The report explores new initiatives in fundraising, marketing and promotion.

This year, the TCT AGM was held in Edmonton, in conjunction with the inaugural Alberta relay event on the TCT, part of a series of relays marking the Centennial years of both Alberta and Saskatchewan. Valerie Pringle, now the chair of the TCT Foundation Board, was on hand to start the relay.

Goals of the TCT Foundation

The financial picture for the Foundation has improved over the past year, and several new partners have come on board including Kellogg's, ESRI Canada, and Timberland. This will definitely raise the profile of the Trans Canada Trail, and provide a greater reach for the goals of the Foundation.

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Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crew at Walhalla, ND

The weekend of May 12-15 marked a Subaru/International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Trail Care Crew trail building workshop at the Frost Fire Ski and Snowboard Area in Walhalla, ND. Rosemary Dzus, the Executive Director of the MRTA, attended this event, one of 70 workshops on the 2005 Trail Care Crew schedule. To see a complete list of visit dates, and other information on the organization, go to: www.imba.com.

The workshop involved a classroom overview of IMBA's goals and past workshops as well as trail building in theory and in practice. All those attending had a chance to put in a day and a half of flagging, clearing brush and excavating a trail bed in the Pembina Gorge.

Saturday was a relatively relaxed day, as the morning was spent in the classroom, and the afternoon was devoted to finding and flagging appropriate routes through the brush. Both days were very cool for the time of year, and although Saturday night saw some snowfall the intense pace of trail clearing on Sunday made everyone forget the cool weather. It was a great opportunity to learn more about all aspects of trail building, and share stories and challenges with other trail enthusiasts.

The award-winning Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crew program includes two full-time, professional teams of trail experts who travel North America year-round, leading IMBA Trail building Schools, meeting with government officials and land managers, and working with groups to improve mountain biking opportunities. IMBA's Crews have led more than 1,000 trail projects since the program debuted in 1997. As a direct result of the work done by the Trail Care Crews over the years, there are now thousands of new and improved trails in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and several European countries.

Although IMBA is geared toward improving mountain biking opportunities, the crews teach "sustainable" trail building, the principles of which are applicable to all trails and all uses. The emphasis is on trail building techniques which use local and available materials whenever possible, require minimal maintenance, and minimize erosion and other natural forces which tend to degrade trails. These principles of trail building have been outlined in past articles in the MRTA newsletter, and are available in a new book published by IMBA, entitled *Trail Solutions*.

In other IMBA news, there is now a Canadian IMBA chapter. As members of IMBA, trail groups may be able to access lower cost group insurance, and funding for trail building. Visit <http://www.imba.com/canada/index.html> for more information.



Picture taken during the IMBA Trail Care Workshop. The event was held on the weekend of May 12- 15 at Walhalla, ND.

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Trans Canada Trail Foundation Annual General Meeting: "10,000 km. Built, 8,000 km. to Go" (Continued)

Between 2005 and 2010 the TCT's goals are:

- Complete the main route of the TCT
- Raise \$25 M to complete construction of the Trail
- Raise \$6 M to sustain the vital Trail-building support services of the Foundation
- Research and document the Trail so that users will have the maps and guidebooks needed for their safety and enjoyment
- Continue to build equity in the TCT name

The primary goal, the completion of the TCT by 2010, is seen as just the first phase of a three-phase strategy for the TCT. Specifically, "substantial completion" means that the TCT will be able to accommodate hiking and cycling and ideally one of the winter activities along its entire length. Given the large land mass and sparse population in certain areas of the country, some sections will be represented by temporary road links.

Phase II, to be completed by 2015, will see the accommodation of all five core recreational activities along the entire length of the TCT, where climatic conditions permit. To accommodate all of the activities, the TCT will likely be a corridor of several trails. Every effort will be made to convert temporary road links to off-road alternatives.

Phase III will mark the addition of selective routes to the main trunk, to serve the areas of the country that were not served in Phase I. This phase is slated for completion in 2020.

How do We Get There?

In addition to encouraging trail groups to apply for a share of the \$15 M in funding from the federal government, the TCT Foundation repeatedly encouraged the representatives of the provincial trail councils to ask for help. In some cases, this help has already been provided in the form of Foundation -funded regional coordinator or community facilitator positions. The beneficiaries of this include New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, with Nova Scotia and the Yukon Territories soon to be added to the list.

The Foundation expressed a willingness and ability to exercise a certain amount of flexibility of the 10% funding limit they would provide to projects under certain circumstances. For example, if specific projects will result in putting a significant amount of trail on the ground, or where a 10:1 leverage ratio is not realistic, exceptions may be made. Flexibility, however, is subject to contractual obligations with the Federal Government and/or other donors. Construction allotments will be held intact.

The Foundation will continue to play an active role in accelerating the development of a comprehensive, reciprocal insurance program in collaboration with the Canadian Trails Federation. At the AGM, the board of the TCT Foundation made a commitment to fund further exploration of such an insurance program, which will be of benefit to all trail groups across the country.

For their part, provincial trail councils have been asked to re-evaluate the chosen route versus the national goals -- Can the proposed route be completed by 2010? If the proposed route cannot be completed by 2010, some difficult choices may need to be made. In addition, building community support, working with trail groups to identify obstacles and facilitate project developments and making the case for recreational trails on the basis of economic development and health were all seen as tasks for the provincial trail councils. Here in Manitoba, these initiatives have always been part of the MRTA's strategy. What has been done in Manitoba is now being used as a model for the other prairie provinces.

With the additional resources being made available, targeted completion of registered trail sections, and renewed effort from the provincial trail councils and the Foundation, the hope is to be on track to hold the Olympic Relay on the completed Trans Canada Trail in 2010.

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MRTA (CONTINUED)

- In every group, something works
- What we focus on becomes our reality
- Reality is created in the moment
- Asking questions of a group influences them
- People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future when they carry forward parts of the past
- If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past
- It is important to value differences
- The language we use creates our reality

The board went on to tackle four components of the Appreciative Enquiry approach which were:

- Appreciating and Valuing (The Best of What Is)
- Envisioning (What Might Be)
- Dialoguing (What Should Be)
- Innovating (What Will Be)

The assumption with this approach is that asking about possibilities rather than focusing on problems will yield a greater vision and more innovation in an organization. The four components were each addressed in a different way, and in the photos you will see the board members involved in the "Envisioning" exercise, where they built a model of what they thought the MRTA could look like in the future.



The result of the weekend planning session was very fruitful, with nine goals and objectives for the board to pursue throughout the next year and beyond. The members of the board are already hard at work on the first designated priority of reviewing their roles and responsibilities and generating action plans from their research and review. A complete list of the goals and objectives is listed below, ranked in order of priority:

- Review roles, responsibilities and function of a board document and generate action plans. Assign Tasks. Discuss & Develop Policies. Build consensus. Clarify and document roles and responsibilities
 - Determine the level of service for each client group
 - Develop partnership with organizations who can promote our message.
 - In the arena of public relations, keep trails in the public eye in part through having more events, having better press coverage, and a calendar of events
 - Identify and agree upon which are clients are
 - Do thorough review on client relations. Research other jurisdictions and the trail industry.
 - Implementation strategy: "Do It"
 - Update mission and vision statements
 - Establish credibility through speaking out on trail issues and demonstrating success
- We would welcome any comments and feedback on the goals we have set for ourselves. Contact the MRTA office if you have any comments or observations.

ABOUT THE MRTA

The mission of the MRTA is "to provide the support, knowledge, information, technology and resources necessary to promote the construction and use of recreational trail throughout Manitoba, thereby improving the economy, the environment and human well being."

Manitoba Recreational Trail Association (MRTA) is the official body overseeing the coordination of the building of the Trans Canada Trail in the province. The MRTA is governed by a volunteer board, currently consisting of ten people, including regional representatives. It is a governing and overseeing body providing management and direction for trail development being undertaken by 17 regional trail associations, with a total of over 250 volunteers. The MRTA has one full time executive director and a 30 hr. per week office administrator position. The Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism has a Provincial Trails Consultant, who works closely with the MRTA.

The MRTA office is located in the Land Information Branch building, at 1007 Century Street, Winnipeg Manitoba.

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The MRTA Marketing Report 2005/2006

In the next few months, the MRTA Marketing Project will move forward as the Marketing Committee, which oversees the project, solidifies its vision for MRTA internal and external communications focus.

With the wet summer there has been little opportunity to promote the trail as news outlets and volunteers have been preoccupied with floods, storms and other disasters. As the weather clears into August and September, however, local associations can get involved in encouraging people to get out on the trail for a fall or winter get-away by working with local restaurants, bed and breakfasts, local snowmobile associations or other tourism-oriented businesses to create joint-marketing packages. You might also get in touch with the folks who are organizing your local fowl supper to discuss adding a before or after dinner walk on the trail to whet appetites or provide a *digestive*.

It would be terrific to hear your ideas for activities in your community. All submitted will be posted on the MRTA website, at www.mrta.mb.ca to inspire other groups. Send your ideas to zjoyce@mts.net.