



Developing Statewide Training Programs

Coordinated by American Trails,
in cooperation with the
National Trails Training Partnership
www.NTTP.net

A Checklist and Brainstorming Guide for Trails Training

This checklist is designed to be used as a quick guide to looking at training in your State or region. It may be used as a tool for brainstorming, turned into a questionnaire, or built into a work plan to improve statewide training. Many of the ideas in this document came from the experiences of the Colorado Outdoor Training Initiative (COTI). The organization was formed to help State, local, and Federal agencies, as well as nonprofit groups and volunteers with better training. The problems faced by the Colorado land managers are typical across America: loss of experienced staff, untrained volunteers and youth workers, insufficient resources to fully care for trails and parks, problem areas with extremely high use, and poorly-built legacy trails that need better solutions.

Your experiences and feedback will help us improve this checklist. Please send any comments to the National Trails Training partnership at nttp@AmericanTrails.org.

1. Documenting the skills and training issues

- What do you know about training for trails and outdoor recreation stewardship in your state?
- Who are currently the main providers of training?
- What are your agency's (or organization's) policies or goals for training?
- What kinds of non-trails-related training are currently done, and what is the training budget?
- What concerns or issues could spark a statewide discussion on training?
- Has anyone done a study or survey of training needs that might include trails issues?
- Can you document the issues in a statement of the current situation and future need?
- Do you have some initial goals and ideas?

2. Identifying the interested agencies and organizations

- Who in your agency needs to be made aware of training issues?
- What should be the role of the State Trails Program?
- Should your State Trails Advisory Committee be part of the effort?
- Who else needs to be involved at the beginning?
- Do you have good contacts with the major recreation and conservation organizations in your state?
- What should be done to spread the work and get people involved?
- Who would be the right person to be the sparkplug for initial efforts?
- Is there a logical time or occasion to hold a meeting on training issues?
- Are there key players and important individuals with knowledge to contribute?

3. Identifying the roles and expectations of participants

- What kinds of training do different agencies and organizations need?
- Are there resources and interest in doing a survey on training needs?
- Are there other ways of finding out who needs what?
- What is the relative need for training volunteers vs. staff?
- What does each group expect to get out of a new training initiative?
- Are there special needs or concerns among motorized recreation interests?
- Can you make training a positive effort that involves both motorized and nonmotorized groups?
- Are there any State or other agency politics that would affect progress on training?
- Is there a State or community parks and trails system that could serve as a testing location?
- Is there an agency or organization with highly respected trail skills?
- Would demonstrations of new techniques in the field be an effective way of raising skills?

4. Identifying specific skills needed

- How many specific trail-related skills or competencies are relevant to your State?
- Are there existing skill definitions within the various agencies?
- What differences exist among various agencies on how skills are defined?
- Are there specific problems with land management policies (e.g. wilderness or OHV areas)?
- Are there some skills that may be beyond this effort (e.g. chainsaw or blasting certification)?
- Can you identify problems with building or maintenance work done on some trail projects?
- Are there specific skills that would help avoid future problems through better training?
- What are some of the best trails and who did the design, construction, and maintenance?
- Is education needed for greenway and urban trails as well as natural surface trails?
- Are there specific needs for different types of trails or activities (e.g. equestrian or winter use)?
- How should accessible trail issues and accessibility education be approached?

5. Analyzing training: existing and needed

- What is the best way to identify all existing training in the selected region?
- How will you communicate with trainers, teachers, and course providers?
- How will participants evaluate the quality of existing training?
- Is a special committee or working group needed for these tasks?
- Does some training stand out as a model of top quality and effective delivery?
- How much existing training is available as a curriculum, syllabus, or workbook?
- Can some existing training be used if properly written up and documented?
- Does a group or agency have outstanding skills that could be turned into a course?
- Can training providers be persuaded to cooperate with new efforts while offering their own training?
- What are the potential problems and politics with making training decisions?
- How could conflicts on priorities and curricula be resolved?
- What is the fairest way to prioritize the different training types and needs?

6. Developing and managing training

- Is there an obvious priority that would help raise funds and support for training?
- How should the initial needs for new training be determined?
- How much can be used from existing curricula and resources?
- Will differing agency needs create problems with adopting a single standard curriculum?

- How much flexibility needs to be allowed in delivery of training for different audiences?
- Who would be capable of writing new material?
- Is the need to provide written training manuals a priority?
- How should responsibilities for developing curricula be organized?
- How should the larger trails community review and provide input on curricula?
- Are there logical partners to provide effective test runs of new training?
- If volunteer instructors are available, how should they be selected and trained?
- What process should be used to develop, manage, recruit, and recognize new instructors?
- Will a master trainer certification process be needed to ensure instructor quality?
- Is a certification or diploma process needed for everyone who receives training?
- * Will there be a need for paid trainers or instructors now or in the future?
- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of training?
- How can training be marketed to groups, parks, and land managers not currently involved?
- How will a database of instructors and crew leaders be developed and managed?

7. Developing ideas for an organization

- Is a new organization the right answer to improving training?
- Is there an existing organization that could facilitate more training?
- Are there reasons that a new nonprofit could do a better job than an existing agency?
- Would a State committee appointed at a high level be the most effective advocate for training?
- Could an informal confederation of interesting groups accomplish the goals for training?
- What formal organizational structures would be effective (coalition, membership,
- What agreements or memoranda of understanding need to be put in place?
- What specific staff such as Executive Director or Training Coordinator would be needed?
- What structure of responsibilities should be used in creating a board of directors?
- Are there good local models for creating committees, meeting structures, and responsibilities?
- What would be the most effective decision-making process among a diverse coalition?
- What are effective ways of working with marketing, publicity, websites, and the media?

8. Developing budgets and costs

- What experience can you draw on to estimate costs of developing a new organization?
- What would be the ongoing costs to run a training organization?
- How much would it cost to develop each new training curriculum?
- What would it cost to put on different types of training locally, and in more remote areas.
- What materials and tools needed for training would have to be purchased?
- Can agencies document their actual costs in putting on any existing training?
- What kinds of donations (e.g. use of buildings, tools, vehicles, etc.) could be counted on?
- Will agencies as well as nonprofits commit to donating staff time?
- Would perceptions of cost effectiveness help develop a cooperative training program?
- Would a nonprofit group doing training make it easier to attract volunteers and donations?

9. Finding funding and resources

- Who could provide initial staff help, office space, communications, and utilities?
- Who would be most likely to provide initial funding in dollars?
- What strategies could ensure that some State funding for training?
- Are there additional State funds besides Recreational Trails that could fund training?
- Can you help trail sponsors build training into legitimate project expenses for grants?

- Who could play a lead role in fund raising efforts?
- Who could provide research on possible funding sources and grant programs?
- What grant writing efforts have worked or not worked?
- Who could lead efforts to work with the federal budget process to find funding for training?
- How much would agencies and nonprofits be able to pay for training?
- Will initial successes generate more funding from agencies?
- Marketing COTI as an effective organization

10. Assisting with volunteer development

- What jobs for the training organization can be done by volunteers?
- What trail and leadership skills are needed most to develop stronger volunteer efforts?
- Is the emphasis on training an opportunity to help build a statewide volunteer organization?
- Are youth corps organizations training leaders and workers effectively for trail work?
- Are agencies using volunteers effectively?
- Do the agencies need training on managing trail projects and volunteers?
- Are State trail grants providing funding appropriately for volunteers, including training?

11. Assessing future directions

- How can you keep on top of determining the need for future training?
- Will changing demographics of public as well as agencies affect training needs?
- What kinds of surveys or other methods of getting feedback are easiest for land managers?
- What strategies can help secure funding and curriculum development for new training
- Would specific kinds of training offerings lead to new funding sources?
- What changing expectations and situations of agencies and organizations can you foresee?
- Could your training be taken to other organizations or agencies in your region?
- Could your training program successes be used as a model for other States?

Additional information on Colorado Outdoor Training Initiative (COTI) is available from www.cotionline.org. Some of the training currently offered by COTI may also be available on a contract basis to other States. COTI partners are also planning to be available to consult with States, other agencies, and nonprofit groups to advance their own training programs.

For information on hosting a variety of additional trainings and workshops for trails and greenways skills, contact Pam Gluck, Executive Director, American Trails at PO Box 491797, Redding CA 96049-1797 • (530) 547-2060 • ntp@americantrails.org.

The National Trails Training Partnership brings you hundreds of resources, studies, and articles, as well as an online calendar of scheduled training on all topics related to trails and greenways. Visit the website at www.AmericanTrails.org.

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