

Salmo Ski Hill Long-Term Trail Development Plan 2016 to 2020

We conducted a community survey for the Salmo Ski Hill trail developments through May and June 2015. We had 49 respondents to the survey. In general, the responses were positive regarding the work completed to date and the direction we have been going.

Thirty-nine respondents (80%) provided us with feedback on existing trails in the West Kootenay that they enjoy and use. The responses to this question give us a good sense of what “feel” people want in their trail experiences. The most popular responses included the Merry Creek trails (Castlegar), Champion Lakes, the Bluff and Flag trails in Trail, Morning Mountain (Nelson) and a number of popular downhill mountain bike trails throughout the area. People provided feedback including: wanting family friendly trails, trails that provide a challenging workout, trails with flow and trails that can be enjoyed by people of different ability levels.

We also asked people to provide us with feedback on their experiences and thoughts relating to multi-use trails (i.e. trails that have both hikers and cyclists using them). Twenty-three people (47%) provided responses. In general people were open to the idea of multi-use trails and had positive experiences elsewhere. Two people commented on the importance of good signage to ensure that users are aware of the multiple uses and one person indicated that if issues arise making trails directional could help. A few respondents commented about safety for hikers, good visibility and one voiced concern about speed of bikes around hiking families. One individual felt that multi-use trails were not appropriate and preferred trails without dogs.

To address these comments we propose:

- Good signage including informing individuals who has the right of way and how to pass different user types.
- On green trails, which are most likely to be used by families, maintain good sight lines and use trail features such as tighter corners to slow speeds of cyclists.
- Provide adequate options for intermediate and advanced cyclists to move the bulk of their use off of easy trails most likely to be used by families.

Finally, we asked people for feedback on the long-term “big picture” for the ski hill trail network. Twenty-six people (53%) responded with most of the feedback encouraging us to keep on doing what we are doing and telling us we are on the right track. There is definitely a desire in the community to see something for everyone in the trail network. From family trails to easy offerings for older individuals and from single-track mountain bike trails to modern machine built mountain bike trails. Our space is limited but our goal will be to develop as diverse a trail network as possible over the next 5-years and provide a recreation hub for the community.

Specific information was received on desired length and difficulty of trails, user types and frequency of use and this information is used to establish our long-term trail objectives and priorities (Table 1).

The map in Figure 1 provides a visual of where we see future trail offerings fitting into our available building area and identifies known constraints or challenges such as extremely steep terrain and wet areas that we need to avoid.

Table 1. The following table summarizes the responses received for each question, how we interpreted these responses and what it means for the long-term planning and development of the ski hill.

Survey Question	Summary of Response	Interpretation and Action
What activities will you use the trails for?	Hiking 88%: 55% said this would be their primary activity Biking 71%: 43% said this would be their primary activity Equestrian 4%: 2% said this would be their primary activity	Majority of the use will be pedestrian and cycling. A small percentage will choose equestrian as their primary use. Continue to plan for and design trails that will serve multiple user types.
How often will you use the trails and at what times?	21 said 2x week or more (43%) 18 said weekly (37%) 4 said monthly (8%) 6 said occasionally (12%) Timing was equal for daytime, evening and weekends.	Majority of the users will be utilizing the trails on a regular basis. Trails will receive a high level of use and need to be constructed to a high standard to stand up to regular use. Continued construction is warranted to serve the needs of the community.
What difficulty of trails are you most interested in? What length of trails are you most interested in?	20% in the easy green circle category 60% in moderate blue square category 20% in advanced black diamond category 45 min - 4.5+ hours with a desire for a variety of options. The most popular length of time was between 1-2 hours	Majority of users want intermediate trails but it is important to provide for other user abilities. Sunset loop provides an easy or green circle option that takes about 1 hour to hike or 30 minutes to bike. Sunrise trail provides an easy to moderate option that will take 2-3 hours return for hiking and 1-2 hours return for biking. Drifter provides an advanced or black diamond option. Target to have two specific intermediate options constructed during 2016 and 2017. Look to develop additional green and black options through 2018-2020.

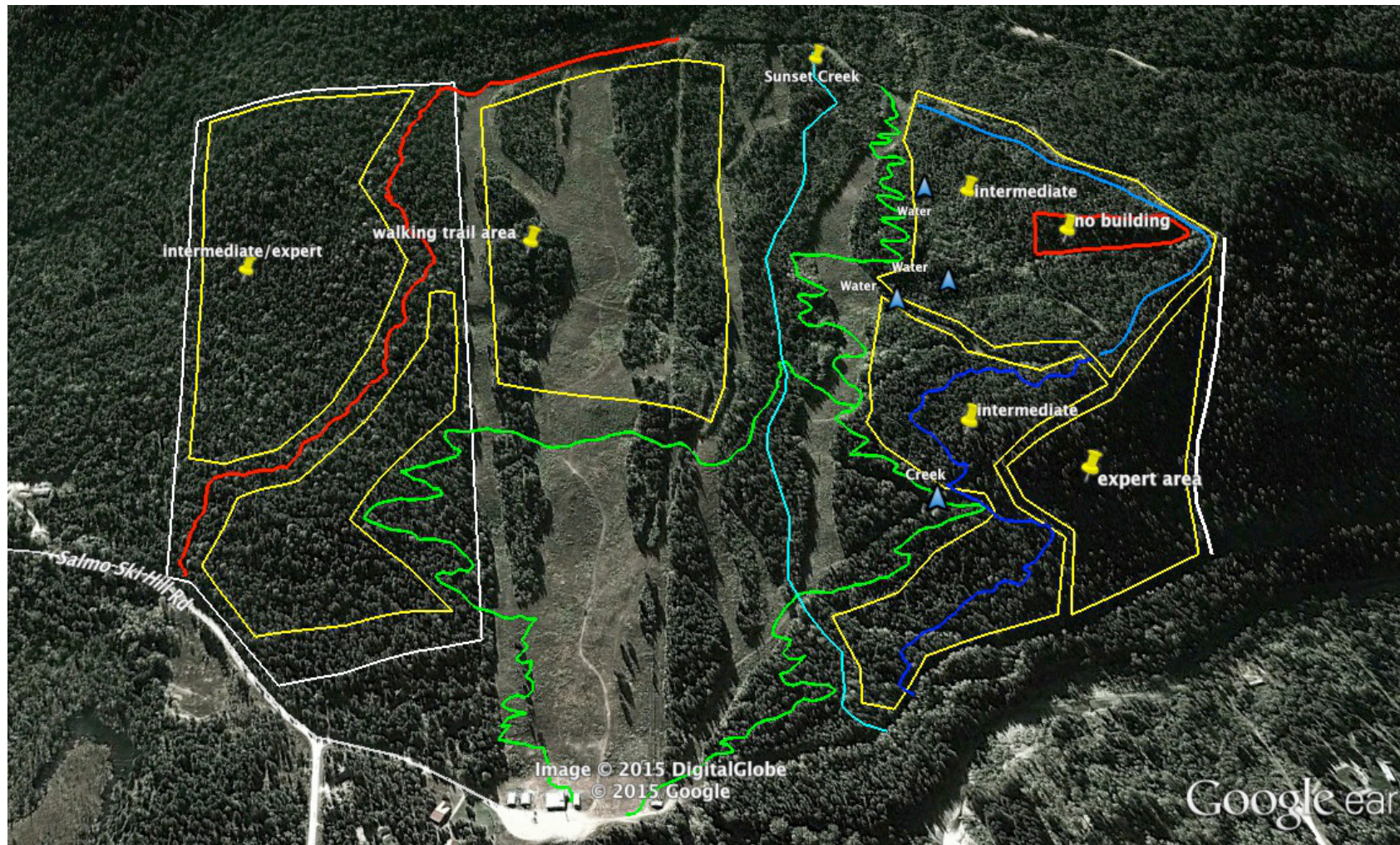


Figure 1. Existing trails Sunset loop and Sunrise in green; Drifter in red; approved intermediate trail for 2016 construction in dark blue with rough location of proposed upper section in light blue. General future building areas are denoted with yellow polygons. The red 'no building' area is extremely steep terrain that is not suitable for trail construction.

Trail Area Signage

To address potential issues arising from multi-use trails and to ensure users are adequately informed about the trail network we will maintain a trailhead kiosk as well as on trail signage.

The trailhead kiosk will be mounted at the location of the ski hill map board and will have the following information:

- A map showing the trail, trail difficulty, ski hill roads, area boundaries and creeks
- Informational signage on the trail difficulty designations (Figure 2)
- Informational signage on multi-use trail etiquette (Figure 3)
- A sponsor sign
- A chalk or white board for people to leave messages such as wildlife sightings, lost keys etc.





 HIKERS	 EQUESTRIAN	 MOUNTAIN BIKERS
<p>What can you expect?</p> <p>Faster trail users – Bikers, runners and equestrians approaching from behind will let you know they are coming. If they say “on your left” this means you should stay to your right.</p> <p>Bikers yield to hikers – It is the responsibility of cyclists to pass at a safe speed. Use friendly communication to let the rider know when it’s safe to pass. Give a verbal acknowledgement, step to the side of the trail or wave the rider by on a wider section of trail.</p> <p>What is your responsibility?</p> <p>Share the trail – When hiking in a group, hike single file. Make sure everyone in your group understands what actions to take when encountering other users.</p> <p>Don’t tune out – If you wear headphones, keep the volume down or only wear one earpiece so you aren’t startled by other trail users. Wearing headphones is NOT recommended due to the presence of wildlife.</p> <p>Yield to horses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stay downhill, spooked horses go uphill. 2. Greet the rider. Your voice will show you are human. 3. Ask how to proceed. If hiking with a child, hold their hand when passing. 	<p>What can you expect?</p> <p>Users unfamiliar with horses – While all trail users yield to horses, many users are intimidated by horses or they just don’t know what to do.</p> <p>What is your responsibility?</p> <p>Manage your animal – Don’t school green horses on high traffic or shared-use trails. Familiarize horses with expected trail users – children, cyclists, dogs, runners etc</p> <p>Negotiate safe passes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greet users early. Hikers and bikers yield to horses but many novice trail-users are intimidated by horses or don’t know what to do. 2. Guide trail users to move to a location safe for both users. 3. Continue communication until the pass is complete. 4. Expect the unexpected. Small children, dogs and the elderly can be unpredictable or easily frightened. <div>  </div> <p>ALL USERS! Keep your dog under control when passing others or being passed Remember that other trail users may be frightened by dogs or be unsure of how to approach or pass.</p>	<p>What can you expect?</p> <p>Surprised trail users – Fast moving cyclists can startle others, especially when approaching from behind. Always ride under control, anticipate users around blind corners and use friendly communication.</p> <p>What is your responsibility?</p> <p>Yield to hikers, horses and uphill traffic</p> <p>Passing hikers and runners</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greet hikers early. 2. Slow down to a similar speed as the other user. 3. Pass slowly and be prepared to stop if needed. 4. Expect the unexpected as humans and animals can be unpredictable and spooked by cyclists. <p>Passing cyclists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Announce your intention to pass with a friendly “let me know when it’s safe to pass.” 2. On a narrow, single track trail stop to the side, put one foot down and lean away from the trail. <p>Passing horses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If possible stop 10m from the horse. 2. Greet the equestrian and the horse to demonstrate that you are a human. 3. Get confirmation on how best to pass. Offer to get off your bike. 4. Pass slowly and steadily after the equestrian gives you the ok.

Figure 2. Sign describing user etiquette for anticipated user groups.

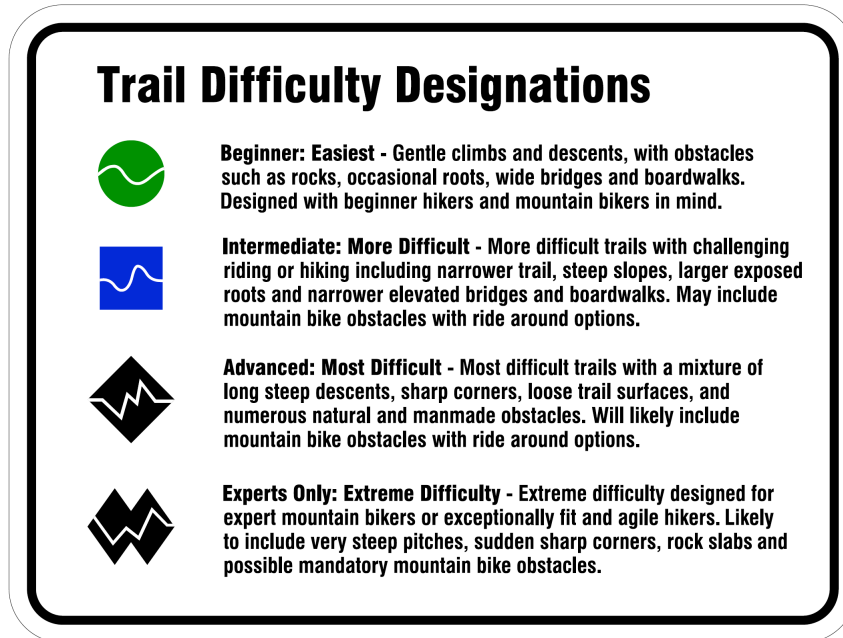


Figure 3. Sign describing trail difficulty designations.

At the start of each trail there will be a sign following standard ski hill ratings with the trail name on a green circle, blue square or black diamond (Figure 4, left). Directional signage in the form of a difficulty 'disc' and arrow will be installed where necessary (Figure 4, right). At the start of a trail there will also be a sign indicating the trail yield policy and non-motorized uses only (Figure 5). If a trail crosses the ski hill at a point where motorized vehicles could access then a no motorized uses sign will be installed.

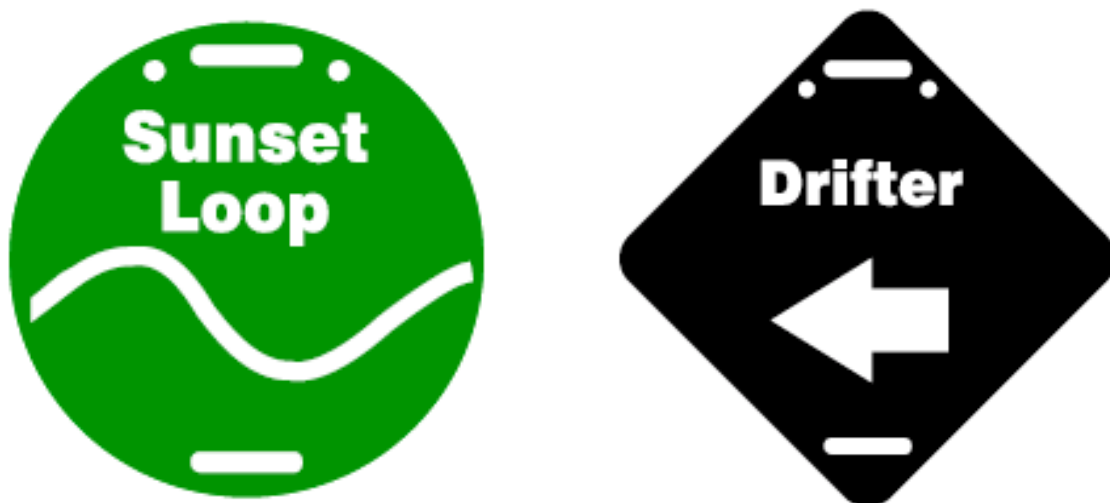


Figure 4. Existing format for trail signs with plastic discs indicating name and directional signage which will include difficulty, direction and where necessary trail name.



Figure 5. Start of trail informational sign.

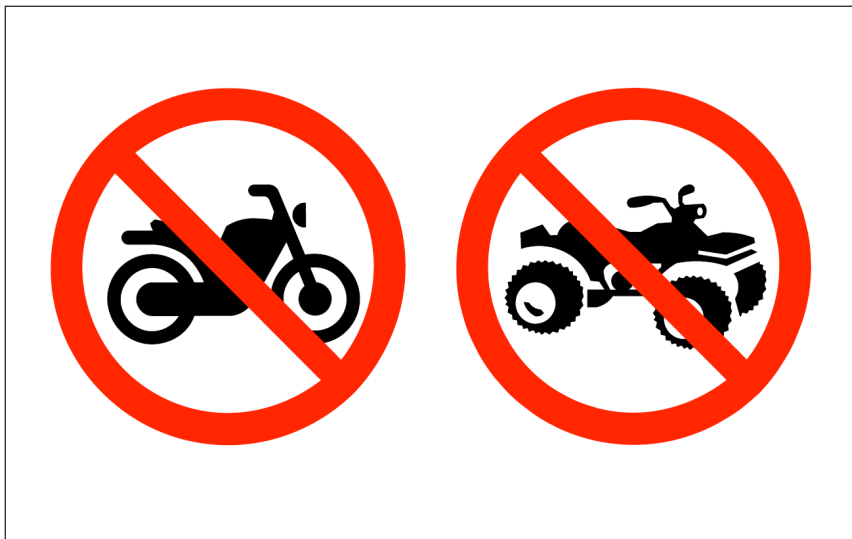


Figure 6. Example no motorized users sign.

New Trail Proposals

The process for establishing new trails within the ski hill area (including area currently under Section 57 agreement) consists of four steps: establishing a team; completing layout; review by directors; and completion of final approval by the Salmo Ski Club (SSC) or provincial authority as required.

1. Establishing a team

- 2-5 members of the society volunteer to form a trail layout team or committee. All members of the layout team must be SVTS members.
- These members must agree to a schedule for meeting to work on layout and timeline for proposal completion. The majority of members should be in attendance each time for fairness.
- At least one member must have previous trail layout and construction experience. For remaining members experience is preferable but a desire to learn is all that is required.

2. Completing layout

- The trail layout committee proposes an area and trail difficulty level as guided by the long-term plan. If an area or difficulty level different from the long-term plan is proposed, then it must first be approved by the board of directors and the SSC and/or provincial authority as required.
- The layout team walks the area choosing the best possible trail route. The team must keep in mind trail sustainability and maintenance and the required trail standards as per the SVTS agreements (e.g. IMBA Guide to Building Sweet Single Track).
- The trail is flagged and mapped using GPS or equivalent Smartphone “app” (e.g. Ski Tracks).
- Any water crossings or potentially seasonal wet areas are noted, photographed and marked on the GPS lines.
- Preference is to have trail route walked in spring before finalized to ensure water spots properly identified.

3. Trail is presented to the directors

- Directors view GPS tracks and photos, if any.
- Directors and layout crew walk the trail and address any concerns about the proposed trail.
- Any concerns are addressed and solutions are agreed upon.

4. Trail is presented for final approval

- Trail is presented for final approval to the SSC and/or provincial authority as required.
- Any additional concerns or requirements are addressed.

Once final approval is received construction can begin. If funding support or materials are required for trail or feature construction the board of directors will provide support in acquiring funding through grant applications and fundraising. Community build days will be organized to support construction and the hope is that members of the trail layout team will take an active role in construction.