

Cranbrook Community Forest Trail Plan

Cranbrook, BC

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Cranbrook Community Forest Society

DRAFT VERSION 10



Acknowledgements

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The CCFS also thanks the individuals and organizations who took the time to provide thoughtful input into the draft plan. The Society greatly appreciates the dedication of so many individuals to the maintenance and development of a world class trail system in the Community Forest.

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Introduction

The Cranbrook Community Forest (CCF) Trail Plan provides a long-term strategy for developing and maintaining a multi-use trail network for users to enjoy visiting and recreating within the CCF (Figure 1). The plan provides background information and goals followed by an inventory and analysis of the current trail system. Recommendations are presented for trail construction.

The trail plan was reviewed and updated numerous times based on public input. The draft plan was presented at the CCF Annual General Meeting on April 14, 2015, and maps were posted on the CCFS website for public review. CCFS members and local organizations (e.g., Backcountry Horsemen of BC, Bigfoot Running Club, Wildhorse Cycling Club, Kootenay Orienteering Club) were asked to provide input via e-mail or at in person meetings with CCFS board members. Comments were compiled by the CCFS board and incorporated in to the plan where appropriate.

The 1997 CCF Management Plan provides some general guidance for trail development and maintenance within the Cranbrook Community Forest. Section 8 promotes the objectives of maintaining a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity experience, and providing opportunities for a wide variety of activities including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

The CCF Trail Plan will be reviewed and revised as required (likely every 5 years). Revisions proposed by the CCFS board or partner organizations will be presented and reviewed at the CCFS Annual General Meeting.

Land tenure

The CCF is located on Crown land and is recognized as a Recreation Site under Section 56 of the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA). Specific trails have not been established under regulation. To protect trails from forestry activities, individual trails may also be recognized under FRPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR).

Motor vehicles are not permitted on the trail system and are restricted to gravel surfaced main access roads. The portion of the CCF south of Highway 3 is covered under Section 58 of FRPA.

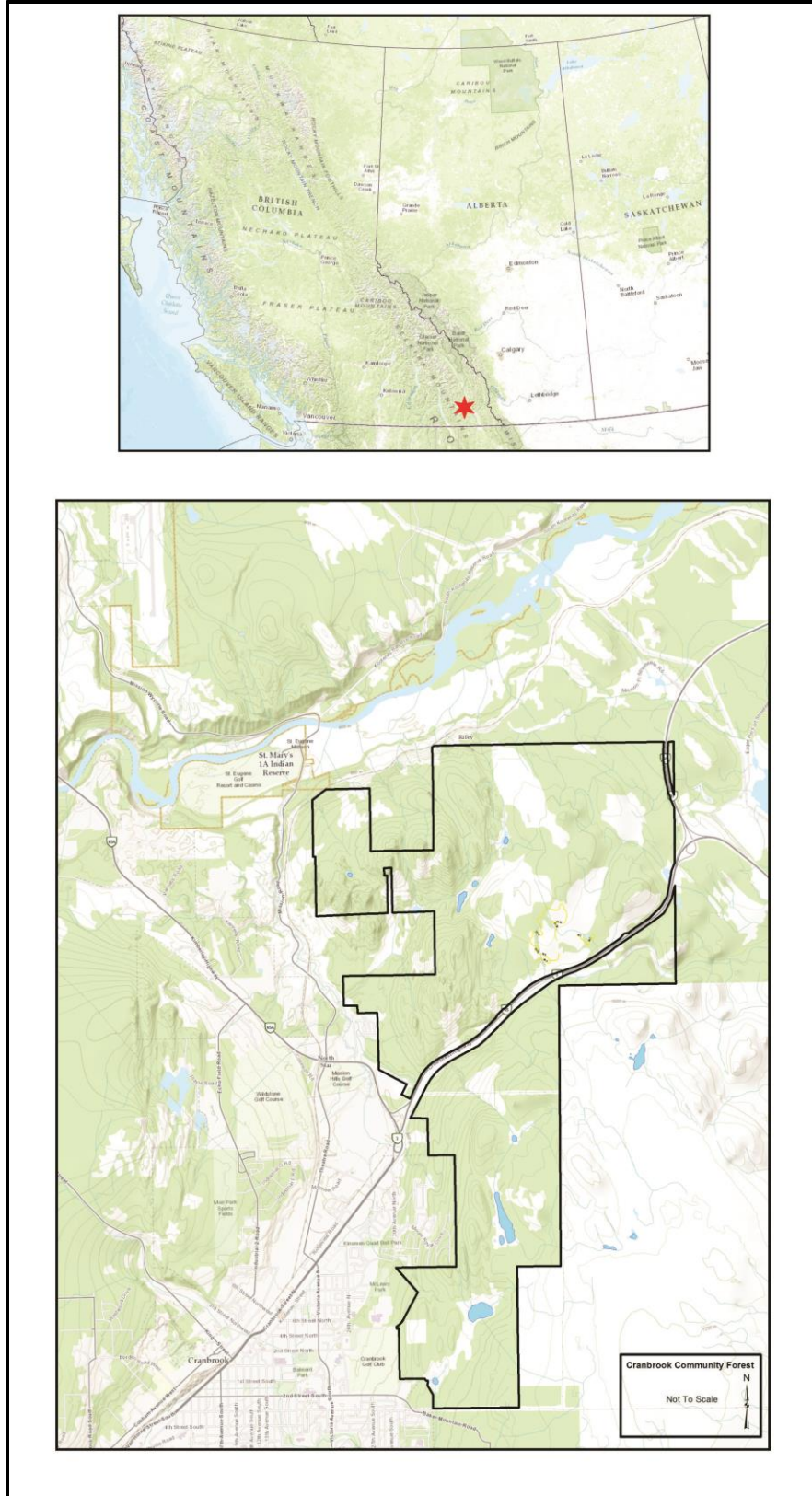


Figure 1. Location of the Cranbrook Community Forest.

Trail users

A well-developed trail system is ideal for people with a variety of skill levels and interests who share a common love of being active in the outdoors. The Trails Plan focuses on non-motorized trail uses. The growth of Cranbrook as a community and as an outdoor recreation destination has resulted in increased use of trails. Routes originally used for hiking and horseback riding are now shared with other modes of recreation including mountain biking (cross country) and trail running. The trail system is also used by commercial recreation operators and for trails-related events (e.g., Six in the Stix). Continued demographic changes in society will change participation rates in different trail pursuits while innovation and technology may bring new activities (e.g. construction of trails to broaden the user groups including wheelchairs).

Since trails are enjoyed by many different user groups, there is the potential for conflicts to arise. This can be minimised through education on respectful use through signage, and outreach by user groups to their membership.

Trail inventory

In 2013, a trail inventory, signage and mapping project was initiated by the CCFS. There are currently 36 authorized trails covering 72 km in the CCF (Appendix 1, Appendix 3). Five of these trails have sections that cross private land. The private land trail sections have not been included in the reported trail lengths, and are shown as dotted lines on trail maps. Trails are classified as:

Established trails: Legal trails established by the Minister under Section 56 of FRPA. Established trails must be given consideration during land use planning decisions. Infrastructure, maintenance, and resources have been invested on these trails. There are currently no “established trails” in the CCF.

Authorized trails: Section 57 of FRPA allows the Minister to authorize the construction, rehabilitation, or maintenance of a recreation trail on Crown Land and may impose conditions that must be met. These trails are not established as in section 56 and are therefore not protected. The minister may revoke authorization.

Unauthorized trails: Trails on Crown Land not authorized by the Minister. These trails are in trespass and will not be given consideration during land use management and planning decisions. No infrastructure, maintenance, or resources will be invested on these trails and infrastructure may be removed.

Additional trail inventory work is required to assess infrequently used or abandoned trails to determine which should be maintained and brought into the recognized trails system, and which should be permanently decommissioned. A more thorough trail inventory will also identify whether sections of the approved trail network require realignment or upgrading to ensure that they are sustainable over the long term (e.g., properly built to avoid erosion).

A finalized trail inventory, with a database and detailed trail map is targeted for completion by 2017.

Trail signage

Signage is an important component of the CCF trail system. Signs provide important information on the CCF and mark established trails. There are currently 6 types of signs within the CCF:

1. Large kiosks at primary access points to display maps and provide information on the CCF
2. Small kiosks at key junctions to display trail maps (note that these require updating)
3. Flexipost signs at trail intersections to display the name and direction of established trails
4. Cedar signs on select trails to display the trail name
5. Interpretive signs around Kettle Lake to display natural history information
6. Plastic signs at primary access routes to inform users that motorized use is not allowed on the trail system (note that some signs have been removed and require re-posting)
7. Loop system indicators (small coloured dots) to indicate loops within the trail system (note that these have not been maintained and are currently in disrepair)

Over time, kiosks may be updated with additional information, including:

- Trails are “recreational trails” and people use the area at their own risk
- There are natural hazards in the forest (e.g., bears and cougar)
- Trail etiquette requires respecting other users of the forest
- All garbage must be packed out
- Dogs must be kept under control at all times
- Cell phones work throughout the forest and can be used on the case of emergency (911)

Trail maintenance

Regular trail maintenance creates safer trails and helps protect adjacent vegetation by encouraging users to remain on the original trail alignment. A successful maintenance regime is responsive to trail repair needs and helps to keep the network performing at its peak.

Historically, trail maintenance in the CCF has been intermittent and typically undertaken informally and anonymously by trail users, as is common for many non-motorized semi-primitive trail systems on Crown Land. It is anticipated that this will continue in the future for simple repairs, such as removal of deadfall.

More recently, the CCFS, in partnership with the Wildhorse Bike Club, has undertaken a more structured and formal process for larger maintenance projects. This involves inspection of various trails, the preparation of trail assessment reports identifying the required repairs

(Appendix 2), and submission to the CCFS for approval. Volunteer work crews are then assembled and scheduled and the identified repairs are completed. If trails require relocating, this requires approval from the recreation officer (through the annual operating plan or otherwise).

In the future, a greater focus on trail maintenance planning (e.g., through an annual trail maintenance plan) would ensure that trails are repaired as required and upgraded for long-term safety and environmental sustainability. Ideally, all trails should be inspected annually in the spring, to document their condition, and maintained throughout the summer and fall on an as-needed basis. Annual spring tasks should include:

- Check the structural integrity of trail features such as bridges, steps, and railings, and repair damage
- Clear windfalls and dangerous trees from the trail bed for safety and to prevent detouring
- Remove loose rocks and debris from the tread surface
- Repair trail washouts
- Remove new plant growth in the trail corridor
- Level the trail tread as necessary and restore the trail grade to the original slopes; fill ruts, holes, low spots, or muddy areas
- Clear and maintain drainage features to minimize trail erosion and environmental damage
- Check and repair water bars, drainage ditches, culverts and drainage dips; construct additional drainage works if needed
- Check, repair or replace signs and trail markers prior to the high-use season

The first priority for trail maintenance tasks should be to correct unsafe trail conditions, followed by repairing environmental damage and restoring trails to a desired condition.


Damage to trails, particularly by mountain bikes and horses during the spring thaw, is a growing concern in the CCF. This may be addressed through education (e.g., posts on social media by particular user groups, and signage at trail heads), seasonal closures of vulnerable trails and providing alternative trails designed to withstand high impact use (e.g., with gravel surfacing).

Trail classification

Trails are graded according to the green circle, blue square, black diamond, and double black diamond system used predominantly in the ski industry and adopted by the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA). Trail widths and standards generally match the difficulty of the trail, i.e. a narrower steeper trail will be rated as more difficult, a wider gentler trail as easier. This is reflected in the rating system (Table 1) and trail specifications (Figure 2).

Table 1. Trail rating chart.

	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV	Type V
Tread Surface	Concrete or Asphalt	Surfaced with Compacted Aggregates	Unsurfaced	Unsurfaced	Unsurfaced
Tread Width	2-4m	2m for double track trails; 1m for single track trails	50-70 cm	30-50 cm	30-50 cm
Clearing width	Tread width plus 1 m on each side	5m for double track trails; 1.6 m for single track trails	1.1 m – 1.3 m	1 m	N/A
Typical Use	Non motorized multi-use	Pedestrian Biking Equestrian	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Trails Riding Equestrian	Hiking, Mountain Biking	Pedestrian, Mountain Biking
Tread Type	Paved Double Track	Double track or Single Track	Single track	Single Track	Single Track
Typical Mountain Bike Difficulty Rating	N/A	Green Circle	Green Circle Blue Square Black Diamond	Blue Square Black Diamond Double Black Diamond	Black Diamond



MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL RATING DESIGNATIONS APPROPRIATE USER	GREEN CIRCLE (Easiest)	BLUE SQUARE (Challenging)	BLACK DIAMOND (Difficult)	DOUBLE BLACK DIAMOND (Most Difficult)
TRAIL DESCRIPTION	Beginners and Recreational Riders. Mountain Bikes recommended. Safety equipment required (including helmets). Gentle slopes and easily avoidable obstacles such as rocks, roots and potholes.	Intermediate Riders. Mountain Bikes required. Increased challenges and difficulty. Full safety equipment required. Challenging riding with steep slopes and/or obstacles, narrower trails with reduced traction. Requires riding experience.	Advanced/Expert Riders. Difficult and technical challenges. Full safety equipment required. High level of fitness required. Mixture of long steep climbs and descents, loose trail surfaces, numerous difficult obstacles to avoid or jump over, drop-offs and sharp corners. Some sections easier to walk than ride.	Expert Riders only. Most difficult and technical challenges. Highest risk level. Full safety equipment required. Do not bike alone. Recommend carrying a cell phone with you. Exceptional bike control skills and balance essential to clear many challenging obstacles. Higher risk level. Only a handful of riders will enjoy these rides. Some sections easier to walk than ride.
TYPICAL TRAIL TYPE FEATURES	II – III Embedded trail obstacles up to 10 cm. high.	III – IV Embedded trail obstacles up to 20 cm. high.	III – V Embedded trail obstacles may exceed 20 cm.	III – V Same
MINIMUM WIDTH TRAIL SURFACE	1 metre Primarily soil and small loose rock, occasional screening.	5 metre Rough natural terrain and increased rock and root debris. TTF's (see below)	3 metre Rugged natural terrain. See TTF's below.	3 m. or less Same
AVERAGE GRADE MAXIMUM GRADE	8% 15%, except rock faces at 25%	10% Climbing – 25%, Descending – 35%, Rock Surface - 4.5%	15% Climbing – 35%	May exceed 15%. May exceed 35%
MINIMUM CURVE RADIUS EXPOSED NATURAL OBSTACLES (MAX. HEIGHT)	2.4 m. 10 cm. max. height. Occasionally higher height for highly visible, easily avoidable obstacles.	1.8 m. 20 cm. max. height	Sharp Corners Various heights, some exceeding 20cm.	Same Same
BRIDGES (MIN. WIDTH)	Min. 1.0 m.	Minimum width of 50 cm. Flat decking is minimum one-half the height above surface.	Various widths. Minimum 30 cm. Flat width of decking is one-quarter the height above surface. Elevated bridges less than 3 m. high above surface.	Most difficult, exceeds Black Diamond.
TECHNICAL TRAIL FEATURES (TTF's)	Small roots and logs to cross, embedded rocks to avoid.	TTF width to height ratio of 1:2. Small bridges (flat, wide, low and rollable from section to section). Small rollable drops. Small teeter-totters, less than 60 cm. high. Small jumps. Medium sized logs.	TTF width to height ratio of 1:4. Elevated bridges and teeter-totters with maximum deck height. Connected Bridges. Larger Jumps. Steep descents with sharp transitions.	Most difficult, exceeds Black Diamond TTF's.
ROCK FACE OR RAMP DESCENTS (MAXIMUM ANGLE)	Rock face descents not to exceed 25% grade.	45%	Not to exceed 120%	May exceed 120%
DROPS (MAX HEIGHT)	None	Drops up to 30 cm., with exit cleared of all obstacles	Drops greater than 30cm. Some mandatory air.	Mandatory air.
JUMPS (MAX HEIGHT)	None	45 cm. No jumps with consequences for lack of speed. Table top jumps max. 40 cm. high.	Table tops, no maximum height. No gap jumps.	Same, except may include gap jumps.
MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL RATING DESIGNATIONS	GREEN CIRCLE (Easiest)	BLUE SQUARE (Challenging)	BLACK DIAMOND (Difficult)	DOUBLE BLACK DIAMOND (Most Difficult)

Figure 2. Trail difficulty ratings and specifications.

Trail construction

All trails proposed for construction must be approved through an application process:

1. The trail route is identified on the ground, geo-referenced and mapped, following the rough trail locations in this trail plan
2. A trail proposal is submitted to the CCFS for initial approval, which includes a detailed map and identifies any safety issues (e.g., technical trail features)
3. The CCFS board reviews the proposals and if approved, submits the proposal to FLNR
4. FLNR approves or rejects the proposal
5. If approved, the trail is constructed as planned
6. The trail is classified and named
7. The completed trail is geo-referenced and mapped, and added to the trail inventory

Effective trail construction standards provide a strong foundation for good trail design, construction, and maintenance and will provide a safe and enjoyable experience for users. A successful trail system is dependent on the cooperation, communication and courtesy of the users, builders, and landowners. The intent of this section is to provide consistent guidelines and standards for trail upgrades and new construction in the CCF. Existing trails will be “grand-fathered” and upgraded to these standards as time and resources permit. The following standards will be considered for new trail development:

- http://www.whistler.ca/site4s/default/files/whistler_trail_standards.pdf
- <http://www.imbacanada.com/resources/trail-building>

Specifications for built structures (e.g., bridges and platforms) will vary depending on the use, location, height, materials and size of the construction required. In most cases, wooden structures are preferred with non-corroding hardware. All structures near waterways require proper environmental authorization.

Proposed new trail development

The trail system in the CCF provides a wide range of benefits to residents of Cranbrook and visitors to the area. Construction of new environmentally sustainable trails will provide the opportunity to disperse use by expanding the useable area of the CCF. Additional trails will allow the trail system cater to a wider range of users by constructing user specific trails, such as relatively wide, low angle, machine built trails for people with disabilities, parents with strollers, children learning how to bike, and novice bike and horseback riders.

Proposed new trails are grouped by area. Area 1 covers land in the vicinity of the College of the Rockies (COTR), Area 2 covers the CCF South, and Area 3 covers the Eager Hills (CCF North). Approximate trail locations and interim names are summarized in Table 2 and identified on maps in Appendix 4. Prior to any trail construction, more detailed mapping (with existing

contour data), field assessments and georeferencing are required. Development of proposed trails has been prioritized (Table 2) and will be built as funds and manpower become available over the next 5 – 15 years.

Table 2. Summary of proposed new trails for the Cranbrook Community Forest

Trail No.	Trail Name	Priority	Type	Difficulty	Area	Status	Map Colour	Map Symbol
101	College Climb	1	Single Track	Easy	1 - COTR	Proposed	Green	Dotted Line
102	Kettle Kapers	2	Single Track	Difficult	2a - Kettle	Proposed	Black	Dotted Line
103*	Espresso	1	Single Track	Moderate	2 - CCF South	Existing	Blue	Dotted Line
104	Coffee Grinder	2	Single Track	Moderate	2 - CCF South	Proposed	Blue	Dotted Line
105	Hillbilly Heaven	3	Single Track	Moderate	2 - CCF South	Proposed	Blue	Dotted Line
106	Beginner's Luck	2	Single Track	Easy	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Green	Dotted Line
107	Watson	2	Single Track	Moderate	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Blue	Dotted Line
108	Baby Chewy	1	Single Track	Moderate	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Blue	Dotted Line
109	Tapeworm	2	Single Track	Difficult	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Black	Dotted Line
110	Eager Beaver	1	Single Track	Easy	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Green	Dotted Line
111	Holmes	2	Single Track	Moderate	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Blue	Dotted Line
112	Monkey Wrench	3	Single Track	Difficult	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Black	Dotted Line
113	Moriarty	3	Single Track	Moderate	3 - Eager Hills	Proposed	Blue	Dotted Line

* Espresso is an existing trail that was not included in the 2013 trails mapping and authorization project. The trail is in good condition and is available for use at any time.

Area 1 – COTR

There are no easy routes from the College of the Rockies trail head up to the relatively flat easy trails around Sylvan Lake. A new trail (101: College Climb) would provide a wide, low gradient machine built trail (< 5%) that could be used by people pushing strollers, younger children hiking, and beginner mountain bikers (children and adults).

Area 2 – CCF South

One existing trail (Espresso) that was not included in the 2013 trails mapping and authorization project is proposed for recognition. Also, there are opportunities to add loop systems that link in to the Isadore Canyon trails by adding trails designed for hiking or biking uphill. Two moderate difficulty trails are proposed that can be combined in a loop with Hillbilly Music (105: Hillbilly Haven) and Espresso (104: Coffee Grinder). There is also one short difficult trail proposed through the rock outcrops directly west of Kettle Lake (Area 2a – Kettle). Installation of an

outhouse and garbage collection facilities at the Isadore Canyon trailhead should be considered, especially now that this section of the TransCanada Trail has been upgraded and a connector trail from 1 km on Isadore Canyon to the Fraggie Rock trailhead is planned for construction.

Area 3 – Eager Hills

There has been very little trail development in the Eager Hills area and there are extensive opportunities. Five new trails of varying ability are proposed for the Fraggie Rock parking area (one easy, three moderate and one difficult). These trails will expand length and range of trail difficulties that can be accessed from the existing parking area. The Fraggie Rock parking area is too small to accommodate existing use on busy days and should be expanded to accommodate the expected increase in use that will accompany proposed trail development. Improvements to this trailhead to address safety concerns should also be considered (e.g. signage for turnoff, raising ramp on turnoff road).

Easy, moderate, and difficult ability trails are proposed for the northeast corner of the CCF. The Eager Lookout staging area is small and there is no opportunity for expansion. A new staging area on the old highway west of the Highway 3/93 clover leaf should be considered as an alternative access point. This area has the benefit of being accessible to horse trailers. Two potential locations have been identified using topo maps and satellite imagery. Possible concerns with these proposed locations include:

1. Vandalism because vehicles are not visible from the highway
2. Further driving distance from Cranbrook and Kimberley
3. Public concern because the Ministry of Highways uses a landing just off the highway to dump road kill carcasses

Additional discussions are required with FLNR before any decisions can be reached regarding this staging area.

Appendix 1. Trail Inventory Data

Trail No.	Trail Name	Type	Difficulty	Length (m)	Trail System	Status	Comment
	Main Access Road	Road	2WD	7604	CCF South		
1	Kettle Loop	Single Track	Easy	727	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
2	Juniper Lane	Single Track	Easy	4095	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
3	Bonehead	Single Track	Moderate	4156	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
3a	UpperBonehead	Single Track	Moderate	1174	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
4	Park Royal Access	Double Track	Moderate	393	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
5	Windy Bluff	Single Track	Difficult	2153	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
6	Fence Line	Single Track	Easy	3896	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
7	Upper Coaster	Single Track	Difficult	1349	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
8	Stunty	Single Track	Difficult	964	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
9	Yer Cheatin' Heart	Single Track	Difficult	429	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
10	Axel Alley	Single Track	Moderate	633	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
11	Knight's Trail	Single Track	Difficult	842	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
12	Suck It Up Princess	Single Track	Difficult	947	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
13	Migor	Single Track	Moderate	2845	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	Additional 237 m on Private Land
14	Green Chicken	Single Track	Difficult	1068	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
15	DNA	Single Track	Difficult	469	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
16	Larch	Single Track	Easy	1180	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
17	Hill Bypass	Double Track	Moderate	755	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
18	Hillbilly Music	Single Track	Moderate	564	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
19	Isadore Connector	Single Track	Moderate	731	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
20	Isadore Canyon	Old Railway Grade	Easy	5047	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
21	Roller Coaster	Single Track	Moderate	2281	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	

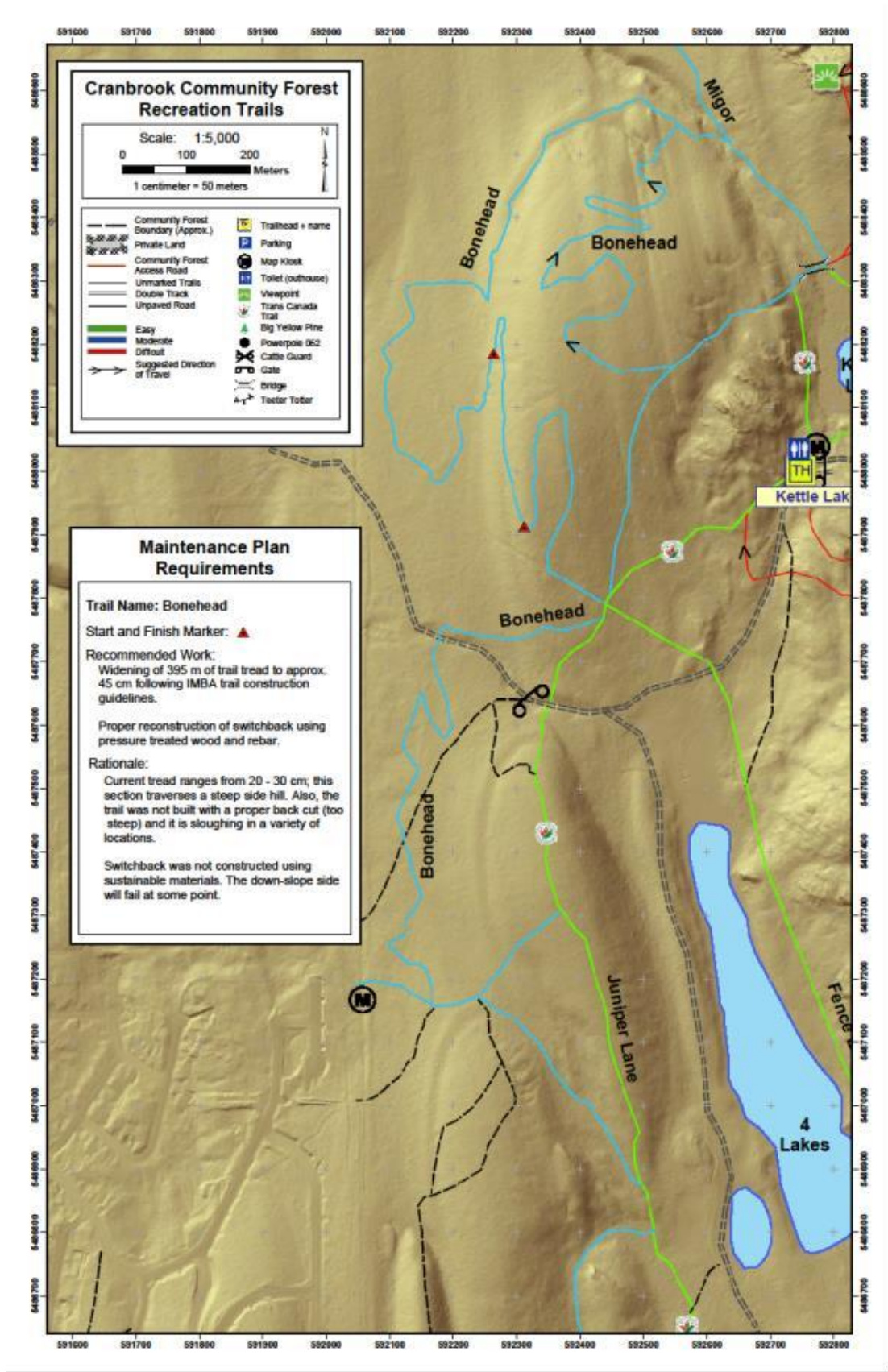
Trail No.	Trail Name	Type	Difficulty	Length (m)	Trail_System	Status	Comment
22	Meandor Trail	Single Track	Easy	1752	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
23	Going Up	Single Track	Moderate	2374	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
24	Brodie	Single Track	Moderate	1320	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
25	Arbour Trail	Double Track	Easy	1635	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	Additional 1127 m on Private Land
26	Pole # 62	Single Track	Moderate	799	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
27	Big Tree Trail	Single Track	Moderate	1497	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	Additional 1760 m on Private Land
28	College Way	Single Track	Moderate	852	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
29	Forest Grove	Single Track	Moderate	2301	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	Additional 753 m on Private Land
30	Logger's Lane	Double Track	Easy	1562	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	Additional 1259 m on Private Land
31	Sylvan	Single Track	Easy	3230	CCF South	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
32	Eager Lookout	Double Track	Difficult	1391	CCF Eager Hills	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
33	Chewbacca Rocka	Double Track	Moderate	8238	CCF Eager Hills	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
34	Chewbacca Connector	Double Track	Moderate	3174	CCF Eager Hills	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
35	Waterpark	Single Track	Difficult	1604	CCF Eager Hills	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
36	Loop Skywalker	Single Track	Moderate	3738	CCF Eager Hills	Authorized (Sec. 56)	
TOTAL Authorized Trail Length				72175			

Appendix 2. Trail Maintenance Forms and Procedures

Trail Inspection Report and Repair Plan



ASSESSMENT		
Assessed By:	Location:	Date:
Comments/Observations:		Repairs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Map Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
REPAIR REQUIREMENTS		
Problem:		Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High
Repair:		
Sketch/Photo Existing Trail:	Sketch/Photo Existing Trail:	
Crew:	Tools/Equipment: <input type="checkbox"/> Pulaski <input type="checkbox"/> Chain Saw <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel <input type="checkbox"/> Pruning Saw <input type="checkbox"/> MacLeod <input type="checkbox"/> Quad <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Materials:



Appendix 3. Cranbrook Community Forest trail inventory maps.

Appendix 4. Cranbrook Community Forest proposed new trail maps.

Appendix 5. Cranbrook Community Forest Inventory of Trail Signage (installed by CCFS)

- Database with photographic records and GPS coordinates of trail signage, gates and kiosks (reference to server location)