

Risk Management final Plan for Thames Valley Trail Association – October 2016

10 Key Elements to be covered under this plan

1. Trail Building and Maintenance Standards
2. Trail Signage & Marking
3. Trail Auditing
4. Training for Hike Leaders & Other Volunteers
5. Waiver of Liability
6. Incident Accident Reports and Records Keeping
7. Landowner Agreements
8. Collaboration with Landowners
9. Insurance
10. Club Budgetting

1. Trail Building and Maintenance:

Thames Valley Trail Association has adopted the guidelines published in the 2001 edition of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's Guide for Trail Workers 3rd edition. A written or digital copy of this guide or an updated version is to be held by both the Director of Trail Maintenance and the Director of Trail Development of the club and to be passed on to succeeding directors.

Provision of onsite general training (excluding the use of power equipment) of volunteers at a trail maintenance or trail development outing is the responsibility of the leader of that particular session so as to ensure appropriate task assignments.

Power Equipment Training. Only those volunteers who are certified in the use of power equipment or who are approved by the leader of a trail maintenance and/or /development session are allowed to use such equipment. Safety Equipment is supplied by our club and must be worn at all times when power equipment is being used.

When a trained operator is using power equipment such as a chainsaw or brush cutter, they must be accompanied by an assistant, preferably one who is trained.

Volunteers who participate in group trail maintenance or development will sign a Waiver of Liability. This is signed at the beginning of each calendar year. Any volunteer who is younger than 18 must have written permission from a parent or guardian in order to participate.

All trail building is to be done with the landowner's prior knowledge and approval. This is the responsibility of the leader of the activity or an agreed-upon delegate.

In order to maintain an inventory of maintenance equipment, the Director of Trail Maintenance will create a list on the club website to locate and track all equipment. When a new Director takes this position, it is the responsibility of the former Director to provide the current inventory information. Each maintenance worker shall ensure that their TVTA tools remain in good repair at the club's expense.

Certification List: A current written record of those volunteers certified in the use of power equipment for trail maintenance or development session is to be available on our club website for use by trail maintenance leaders. Periodic updates of this list are to be sent to the Trail Maintenance Director by those responsible for organizing and verifying a club certification course. The information will then be forwarded to our club webmaster by the current Trail Maintenance Director for posting.

¹(as suggested in Hike Ontario's draft document entitled "The Key Elements of Risk Management for Ontario Hiking Clubs and Associations" Dec 28, 2010)

All written records concerning trail maintenance and development are to be maintained by the Trail Maintenance and the Trail Development Directors forever. When a Director leaves their position, such documents as they have in their possession are to be passed on to their successor in a timely fashion.

2. Trail Signage and Marking:

Our club uses the widely-recognized form of directional trail guide - the white blaze for a main trail and blue blaze for a side trail.

Signs at our trailheads will indicate in positive language the permitted activities only, the assumption being that all other activities are prohibited. Signs may also be posted to convey clear guidelines for trail use and behaviour such as the Trail Users Code. Signs will also state that the trail is unsupervised and is for "use at your own risk."

The Trail Development Director is responsible for determining new sign locations and for their initial installation. The ongoing repair or replacement of trail signs is the responsibility of the Trail Maintenance Director.

3. Trail Auditing:

Our club undertakes regular inspections and audits of the trail for hazards and signage and then documents these inspections and any resulting actions. Forms that document these activities are kept by the Trail Maintenance Director and are passed from the former to the new director when a change in personnel occurs, with a copy being submitted to the Webmaster.

Forms will be stored in the club computer for use by those performing trail audits or maintenance/development.

4. Training of Hike Leaders and other volunteers:

As of January 2012, all hike leaders must be certified by Hike Ontario through the recognized Hike Leader Certification Course. Some of our leaders may be recognized for their prior experience and therefore may not be required to become Hike Ontario certified. This would include leaders who lead day hikes in wilderness areas 2 hours from the road. The decision to recognize this experience rests with the club board.

Following a hike leader certification course, it will be the responsibility of the course leader to provide the Activities Director with a list of those successfully certified who plan to lead hikes for TVTA. The Activities Director will then send this information to the Members Only Webmaster to be added to the website list of leaders for use by appropriate personnel.

Prior to commencing any club-sponsored hike, the leader will ensure a discussion occurs with the participants and explain that they are signing a waiver that has legal implications. This will ensure that all participants understand that the hike leader is a volunteer and is exempted from liability. Participants must understand that there are risks involved in hiking and that they are accepting responsibility for these risks. Leaders must also ensure that they or a designate is carrying a cell phone for contacting emergency services, if required. The waiver should include reference to Hike Ontario.

First Aid training – First Aid training – Our club promotes and provides opportunities for members to undertake first aid training. The club will reimburse a board-approved sum to a maximum of 10 people each year to help defray expenses from their Basic First Aid training. We will also reimburse a board-approved sum (suggested maximum of \$250) to help defray expenses for an Advanced/Specialized First Aid course for an annual maximum of 2 people.

At the February board meeting each calendar year, the Board will appoint a First Aid Co-ordinator to document the First Aid training of club members. This Co-ordinator will provide to the webmaster an up to date list of those in the club who are certified in First

Aid as their courses are completed during the year. This list will be posted on our Members Only website available to appropriate personnel.

5. Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk:

The “Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk” form – see Appendix A – will be verbally explained by the hike leader or Trail Maintenance/Building leader before being signed. This will ensure knowledge of conditions by participants and what rights they may be waiving by signing the form. The form will be read and signed by all participants before the hike or activity begins. The signed forms will be retained in storage by the Activities Director forever. Forms will be available on the website.

6. Incident/Accident reports:

At the time of an incident or as soon as possible thereafter, the Hike or Trail Maintenance/Building leader will complete our club’s standard incident reporting form. The form will then be filed with the appropriate Director (either Activities or Trail Maintenance) for future reference. Reports should be kept forever. Significant incidents shall be reported in a timely manner to both our club insurer and to Hike Ontario. The current version of the Incident/Accident report is available for downloading at our club website. Hard copies of the form are available at Grosvenor Lodge, or from the Activities Director. Copy must be sent to info@hikeontario.com and to President@tvta.ca

7. Landowner Agreements: (To be revised later)

NB – sections 7 and 8 will continue to be reviewed as our landowner list becomes updated. This updating initiative continues to be in progress as of the date of this policy review.

A verbal agreement between a landowner and the Thames Valley Trail Association shall be followed by confirming correspondence to the landowner. A copy of our insurance certificate will be provided to the landowner upon request. The Director of Trail Development is responsible for maintaining these agreements.

8. Collaboration with Landowners: (to be revised later)

There will be regular liaising with all trail landowners, private and public as part of due diligence. Regular contacts and familiarity with elected municipal officials and staff and their official plans may also reveal pending developments which could affect trails. This is also part of our due diligence. Landowners are sent a copy of our newsletter, TVTA Trekker (which may be downloaded from the website also).

Other collaborative measures which may benefit trail clubs should include having trails clearly marked in municipal official plans and park plans with the permitted uses specified e.g. “pedestrian only” or “mixed use”.

Special trail club events may require additional liaising efforts with landowners.

9. **Club Budgeting:** The provision of monthly reports from the Treasurer to members of the TVTA board will ensure that we have adequate budgetary provision for building and replacing unsafe trail infrastructure and signage, hike leader training, and insurance coverage.
10. **10. Insurance:** The Thames Valley Trail Association carries both general and directors’ liability insurance. The club maintains complete and accurate records in an appropriate manner. The current Hike Ontario Insurance Broker is Pearson Dunn Insurance Inc. Any questions concerning insurance are to be sent to info@hikeontario.com. Frieda Baldwin, Hike Ontario, is the only person who contacts the insurance company. 1-800-894-7249.

St. Marys Cement and UTRCA-Fanshawe will carry liability insurance within their own jurisdictions. They will be added as Additional Insured to the TVTA insurance policy. A copy of this insurance is mailed to the 2 Additional Insureds each year.

All club or trail association hikes must be published in our Trekker or on our website calendar. To be covered by the Hike Ontario insurer, any unauthorized hikes must be communicated to and acknowledged by Hike Ontario in writing. info@hikeontario.com

In the event of a lawsuit, pass all legal correspondence – without comment or answer – to the insurer immediately.

Please proceed to page 6 for Appendices.

Submitted by Risk Management Committee to TVTA Board for approval Feb. 2012 :Lynn Brush, Judi Einarson, Karen MacKinnon, Maureen McGauley (chair) Revised 2013 & 2014 – Karen MacKinnon, Maureen McGauley, Barb Doney, Jane Vincent-Havelka REVISED MARCH 2016 - Barb Doney, Paulette Renaud, Jane Vincent-Havelka .Revised October 2016 – Judy Kwasnica, President

APPENDIX A : WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK page 6

TVTA WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

I acknowledge that this activity of the Thames Valley Trail Association, in which I am participating, involves risks which are beyond the control of the Association. Notwithstanding the acknowledgement of such risks, I hereby release the Thames Valley Trail Association, Hike Ontario, and their contractors, employees, volunteers, agents, assigns and executors from all claims for damage however so arising as a result of my participation in this or any other activity organized by the Association. I agree to pay the cost of any emergency evacuation of my person or belongings that may be necessary. I affirm that I am aware of the nature of the activity, the duration and degree of difficulty and that I am properly equipped and physically able to participate. I have no medical or other condition which might preclude my participation. As an adult, I accept responsibility for any person under 18 years of age in my care. I agree to follow the directions of the leader.

Leader(s):	Area of Hike:	Date & Time:
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Signature	Print Name	Phone #	Emergency #	TVTA Member (Y/N)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				

Rev. 28 Sept. 2013. Please forward completed form as soon as possible to the TVTA Activities Director

APPENDIX B : ADDITIONAL DUTIES RESULTING FROM NEW POLICIES – pg. 2 of 4

TRAIL MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR	TRAIL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR	WEBMASTER
Have a copy of the Bruce Trail Guide for Trail Workers	Have a copy of the Bruce Trail Guide for Trail Workers	Post lists of certified hike leaders, certified power equipment operators, and First Aiders on club computer
Record and provide updated lists to webmaster of those certified in the use of power equipment		Posts to the club website any club-endorsed hikes not published in the Trekker
Keep records of trail maintenance sessions forever ☑ pass all records in possession to new directors when elected.	Keep records of trail development activities forever ☑ pass all records in possession to new directors when elected.	
Ensure signs at all trailheads are in good repair	Post signs at trailheads	
Inform blazer of the need for refreshing blazes	Inform blazer of need for blazes on any new trail sections	
Ensure regular trail audits are completed and recorded	Maintain records of all landowner agreements. Pass these records to your successor in a timely manner.	
Keep inventory of all club tools and equipment and ensure that regular maintenance is done on tools		
Ensure Incident Reports received are dealt with in a timely manner and copies kept forever.		

APPENDIX B :ADDITIONAL DUTIES RESULTING FROM NEW POLICIES – pg. 3 of 4

ACTIVITES DIRECTOR	DIRECTOR AT LARGE
Record names of newly certified hike leaders and inform webmaster for inclusion on club computer and/or website	Record and track those certified in First Aid and provide names to webmaster for inclusion on club computer and /or website
Maintain Waiver of Liability forms forever.	
Ensure that Incident Reports received are dealt with in a timely manner and copies kept forever.	

APPENDIX C : INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**INCIDENT REPORTING FORM****COMPLETE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE****Thames Valley****Trail Association**

In the event that a hiker has an accident/injury the hike leader(s), with the help of other witnesses to the accident/injury must complete this form as soon as possible. **Submit incident report:** If medical attention is required or a concussion is expected. **If** the hiker does not complete the hike in the normal manner and time frame. **If** there is damage to property. **If** the EMS is activated. Submit the report to your TVTA Activities Director, club President as well as to Hike Ontario at **info@hikeontario.com**. Hike Ontario will pass the report on to the insurance broker. Include waiver sheet also if possible.

Hike Leader(s)/Trail Maintenance Leader(s)

Name: _____ Phone#: _____

Email address: _____ Incident Date: _____ Time: _____

Event/Location: _____

Weather: _____

Conditions of the trail at time of incident: _____

Witnesses Names: _____

Casualty Information:

Name: _____ Phone#: _____

Email address: _____ Gender: _____ Approximate age: _____

Describe the incident: _____

Describe any injuries: _____

Describe any action taken: _____

Was the subject transported to hospital, clinic or doctor? _____

TVTA member: Yes ___ No ___

Police/Fire/Paramedic information including, name, badge number and phone number: _____

Describe any property damage: _____

Report submitted by: _____ Date: _____

TVTA Policy - Advertising Hikes - February 2016

The TVTA Board is responsible for advertising hikes in only two places.

1. Hikes are advertised in the Trekker newsletter and website and hike leaders may add hikes to the website after the newsletter has been published. (Approved by the Board of Directors March 3, 2014)

2. Hikes are advertised on the TVTA website as follows:

a) Members must log in to see the hikes offered to members only and guests. This information is not available to the general public.

b) Open Hikes which allow any member of the public to participate are also advertised on the TVTA public home page using the Meet Up icon. Anyone checking our website can access this information.

(Approved by the Board of Directors March 3, 2014)

c) Rambler Hikes are posted on the member's section a minimum of 7 days prior to the hike. The calendar will display these hikes with a start time, hike details, and a meeting location map (if available).

3. Hike leaders have the option of advertising on the Meet Up site. Hikes are posted only by the Meet Up Coordinator on the Meet Up site when the hike leader designates his/her hike as an "open hike". The hike leader may set an attendance cap. The hike leader is only identified in the posting by first name. No personal information is available to the Meet Up members or to the public at large. The Meet Up coordinator reports to the Activities Director. (Approved by Board of Directors, May 5, 2014)

4. For hikes to be insured they must be published in the Trekker, put on the TVTA website, or the information is sent to Hike Ontario before the hike, info@hikeontario.com There must be no charge for the hike. Certified hike leaders are to lead the hikes and a cell phone must be carried for the insurance to be valid. Insured activities include hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, bicycling, paddling, training events, trail building and maintenance, picnic and AGM. The primary activity of the club must be hiking. Liability sheets are to be kept forever. Waiver forms should be filled out for trail maintenance events also (Hike Ontario Risk Management April 2013)

5. All TVTA hikes are dog-free unless advertised as dog-friendly. For dog-friendly hikes, dogs must be leashed at all times and owners must clean up after their dog. (Feb.20, 2014 - Board approved policy)

All TVTA hikes are Members and Guests only unless advertised as OPEN.

This policy may be revisited in the future if the TVTA board members and hike leaders deem it necessary.

Procedures:

1. Saturday Morning Walks are published in a pamphlet, in The Londoner, in the Trekker and on the TVTA home page. They are not to be posted on the Meet Up site. (recorded in the minutes of TVTA Board of Directors meeting - March 3, 2014)

2. Rambler Hikes are posted on the member's section a minimum of 7 days prior to the hike. The calendar will display these hikes with a start time, hike details, and a meeting location map (if available).

3. Hike leaders post their own hikes on the calendar using the Membee tool.

4. The Trekker editor and assistant transfer the information from the calendar to the Trekker. Hikes which are entered after the Trekker is published for the next quarter do not appear in the Trekker.