

Inclusive Trail Construction and Maintenance Guidelines Project receives Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant

The Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative (TAOC), of which COLT is a member, has received an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant (\$97,500) to develop guidelines for the construction and maintenance of recreation trails that are environmentally sustainable and accessible to people of different abilities. The guidelines will provide step-by-step information for the current “best practices” for inclusive recreation trail construction and maintenance. Inclusive recreation trails are those that follow the principles of sustainable and universal design. Sustainability ensures that the trail is compatible with the surrounding environment and supported by the local community. Universal design focuses on meeting the needs of the widest possible range of users, including people of all ages and abilities.

The TAOC is a joint endeavour of trail and accessibility organizations from across the province. Organizations and networks cooperating on the project include The Abilities Centre, Oak Ridges Trail Association, Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, Township of Uxbridge, Trans Canada Trail-Ontario, Pathways to Health Committee, Variety Village, Haliburton Highlands Trails and Tours Network, Huronia Trails and Greenways, Kawartha Lakes Green Trails Alliance, Fitness Friends, Go for Green, Ontario Trails Council, Hike Ontario, Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre, City of Toronto, Quetico Provincial Park, Central Ontario Loop Trail, Active Living Resource Centre for Ontarians with a Disability and the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults.

The Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative was formed because of the substantial amount of “misinformation” and erroneous assumptions that are commonly held regarding the nature of “accessible” recreation trails. It is a myth that a trail must have a paved surface and be constructed with heavy equipment in order for it to provide access to people with a wide range of abilities. Traditionally, trail groups have been sceptical of accessibility issues because of the construction and maintenance demands required in the built environment. Similarly, accessibility groups are strong advocates for trails that provide access to a wide variety of natural environments and experiences. The focus of the TAOC is ensuring that all Ontarians, including those with disabilities, can benefit from a range of trail experiences (from highly urbanized settings to wilderness) that are developed in a way that respects and enhances protection for the natural environment.

For more information, please contact:
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