

August 2020

Summary of Trails Maintenance and Monitoring System

This a summary the key elements of a trail maintenance and monitoring systems as recommended by Sport Ireland Outdoors. Best practice when managing a trail ensures that four key elements are in place.

1. Regular Maintenance
2. Regular Monitoring to check for issues
3. Repair of any issues found
4. Record keeping (of all of the above)

1. Regular Maintenance:

- Routine work carried out periodically – e.g. cut back vegetation. drains cleared etc.
- This should be planned in advance and documented
- Different tasks may be done at different intervals depending on the need – e.g. once a year, twice a year etc.)

Example of a Maintenance Plan and Schedule and Records

Location	Element	Task	When	Comments
Trailhead	Map Board	Clean	March	Done
Entire Loop	Litter/rubbish	Pick Up	Monthly	Done fridge dumped in car park.
First Laneway	Vegetation	Cut Branches	Apr/ Jun	Done
Bridge	Drains	Clear/Open	Apr	Done -Drain collapsed needs work
Etc.				

2. Regular Monitoring

- Regular monitoring of the trail should be carried out to ensure it is in good condition.
- The frequency of monitoring on a trail is decided locally but should be determined by how much the trail is used, the amount of infrastructure on the trails, seasonal impacts and any other factors that might be relevant.
- Trail monitoring can be carried out at the same time as maintenance activity if that suits.
- Trail monitoring can be undertaken by anyone that is comfortable walking in the outdoors (or by the person/ people doing the maintenance if that suits).
- When monitoring check for any issues which would potentially have a negative impact on a visitor to the trail e.g. waymarker missing, slippery stile etc. (see list of potential issues to check below)
- Check for other issues which may need to be addressed e.g. water eroding the trail
- Record issues and comment as per example below.
- If a minor issue can be fixed easily – fix it.

August 2020

Example of Monitoring form and Records

Item No	Location / Reference	Issue / Description	Done / Comments
1	Stile from field to road at Crohan's Cross	Barbed wire attached to handrail	Removed barbs, met farmer so he knows about it.
2	French River Ref KL17-3	Footbridge broken	All slats damaged/broken. New bridge needed. Took photos.
3	Larkin's field, by the trough	Waymarker loose	Tightened, packed with stones. Grand for now but may need concrete in future.

Trail Monitoring – Potential Issues to check

<p><u>Map Board</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirty/Illegible • Loose • Damaged 	<p><u>Vegetation & Litter</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation Blocking Route/Too Long • Vegetation Blocking Stiles/Gates etc. • Litter/Dumping
<p><u>Waymarking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing • Misaligned/Confusing • Hidden/Obscured/Dirty • Inconsistent (Colour/Name/Symbol) • Loose/Leaning • Diversion without Waymarking 	<p><u>Trail Surface / Water Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail Obstructed/Impassable • Muddy/Boggy • Flooded/Waterlogged • Slippery/Loose • Difficult to Walk for more than 5m • Drains Blocked/Overflowing • Broken Drains/Waterbars etc
<p><u>Missing Signage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy Road (Motorists & Walkers) • Bulls/Livestock • Electric Fencing across/beside Trail 	<p><u>Trail Furniture / Structures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged • Loose • Slippery Surface
<p><u>Potential Safety Issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbed Wire/Sharp Objects • Hidden Dangers e.g. Holes/Wires/Drops • Damaged/Rotting Trail Furniture • Slippery Surfaces • Dangerous River Crossings 	<p><u>Fencing (Across/Beside Trail)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed Barbed Wire • Exposed Electric Fence • Broken/Damaged Fence

August 2020

3. Repair of any issues found

- If there are any issues found when monitoring a trail that needs somebody to come back and fix or repair this needs to be planned and organised.
- A worksheet to document what is required can be used (**example below**)
- Repair work may require additional tools, material or expertise. Larger jobs may need outside help e.g. a contractor
- Issues which would potentially cause injury to a trail user should be treated as a priority
- If an issue is considered to be a high risk the trail may need to be closed while the issue is addressed.
- Issues on an easy grade trail may be more significant than at the other end of the spectrum on a difficult trail where users should be more capable and more experienced.

Example of Repair Worksheet

Reference:	KL17-3
Issue Location:	Trail section from Bridge to Road
Issue Identified:	Drain on northern side collapsed and broken, water running onto path. Starting to cause damage.
Work Required:	Re-build full drain (approx. 200 metres)
Person/s Assigned:	RSS (John Smith, Patrick O'Malley)
Tools / Resources Required:	2 x RSS; 3 days Shovels, mattocks, picks, wheelbarrow, buckets Re-build using existing material – stone, gravel in situ. If more needed, can request.
Comments:	1 x small trailer of building stone required to line and secure drain. Cost €90
Date Completed:	26/5/17

August 2020

4. Record keeping

- A plan and schedule for maintenance and monitoring should be documented
- Record all maintenance work carried out.
- Record all monitoring carried out and any issues found.
- Record any repair work.
- Use your own forms or the ones shown above for record keeping (all available for download from <https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/publications-resources> or directly from links below.
- Using these forms will ensure the record required for a Maintenance and Monitoring System are kept.
- It is also good practice to keep a log every time routine maintenance and monitoring is carried out on the trail.

**** Blank forms for use ****

Blank forms can be downloaded from <https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/publications-resources> or directly by clicking on the links below.

[Maintenance and Monitoring form](#) - can be used to record maintenance and monitoring activities. This also lists potential issues to look out for when monitoring a trail. Using this form will provide you with a Maintenance and Monitoring plan and record keeping.

[Trail Maintenance and Monitoring Planning form](#) – can be used to assist in developing a Maintenance and Monitoring Plan. Also includes a form for recording repair work.

[Trail Repair Worksheet](#) - can be used to describe and plan repair work needed to address a specific problem on a trail.(see item 3 below)

Note: If you already have a system in place for the maintenance and monitoring of trails, that ensures that any issues found are addressed and records are maintained there is no requirement to change anything. Just provide an update to Sport Ireland as required via the online form.

It is not a requirement to use the template forms provided by Sport Ireland. These forms are for use if you do not already have suitable forms.

Please contact us at 01 8608800 or outdoors@sportireland.ie if you need any help or advice