Trail Management Scoring

These notes should help in scoring each question in relation to the management structure of a walking trail. The scoring is kept simple, from 0-3, to keep subjectivity to a minimum.

Scoring System: Please use the following ratings			
0	None	**1**	Something in place, but basic and lacks important elements
2	In place, but needs some improvement	**3**	Meets requirements

Please Note: For Registration Inspections, it is not expected that there will already be records of previous maintenance, monitoring & repair activities. A score of 3 may be given in these cases.

For further details, a *Trail Maintenance & Monitoring Guidelines* document has been circulated. It may be downloaded from here .

See also the *Management Standards for Recreational Trails*, downloadable from here:

If there is a current system in place that meets the standard, no changes are required. If required, suggested templates for trail maintenance, monitoring and repair are available to download from here The templates may be amended to suit.

Sport Ireland Trails offers training courses to help responsible bodies in sustainably managing trails. The *Trail Maintenance & Monitoring Planning* course will be of particular interest in this area. Please see the training calendar at: https://www.irishtrails.ie/Education_Training/. For further information, contact Jean Boydell at jboydell@sportireland.ie or 01 8608836.

1. **Trail Management** (The body responsible for the trail)
i)   **The management team is appropriate for the length, complexity and popularity of the trail.** A short, simple trail can be effectively managed by a small team. However, a long-distance trail with a variety of landowners, terrain types, stakeholders and other factors will need a wider management group in order to be workable and sustainable.
ii)   **The team has clear roles and holds regular meetings with minutes.** Tasks should be identified and shared among the management team. The more complex the trail, the fewer jobs one person can do. There should be regular meetings with appropriate notes taken.
iii)   **There is a suitable promotion plan in place for the trail.** Promotion can include websites, brochures, events and advertisements, as appropriate.
iv)   **There is a suitable funding plan in place for the trail.** Enough money will be needed to cover all trail requirements including promotion, materials, personnel, maintenance, monitoring and repairs. Funding streams may include sponsorship/grants, events, collections/donations, advertisements etc.
v)   **The management team has access to appropriate resources & personnel to carry out trail maintenance, monitoring and repairs.** A voluntary group may be able to do some of this work for a simple trail but usually assistance from local authorities, community employment schemes or similar will be required.

2. **Trail Maintenance** (Regular tasks to keep the trail in good condition)
i)   **There is an appropriate system in place to plan and record trail maintenance, with suitable forms/templates.**   Suitable personnel and documents are required to plan, carry out and keep records of all trail maintenance activities. These should be appropriate for the length and complexity of the trail.
ii)   **All regular maintenance tasks have been identified along the entire trail.**   Every section and element (e.g. waymarker, fence, stile) of a trail will have some regular maintenance requirements, such as cutting vegetation, cleaning map boards, and scraping mud. These should be identified and listed.
iii)   **Each maintenance task has been given an appropriate frequency.**   Some jobs will need to be done more often than others and may range from weekly to even decades. Examples include clearing drains and picking litter throughout the year, to replacing stiles maybe every 15 years. All should be listed and planned.
iv)   **It is clear when each maintenance task will be carried out.**   There should be a complete maintenance calendar, with clear dates assigned to each task.
v)   **It is clear who will carry out each maintenance task.**   This can be a general grouping (e.g. Rural Social Scheme or Trail Management) or can be specific persons.
vi)   **Clear records are being kept of all trail maintenance activity.**   It should be possible to see what maintenance activity has been happening on the trail, and when. If done to plan, each task can simply be ticked off. Any amendments to the schedule should be noted.

3. **Trail Monitoring** (Checking the trail for issues)
i)   **There is an appropriate system in place to plan and record trail monitoring, with suitable forms/templates.**   Suitable personnel and documents are required to plan, carry out and keep records of all trail monitoring activities. These should be appropriate for the length and complexity of the trail.
ii)   **An appropriate monitoring calendar is in place, which may vary throughout the year, depending on seasons, events etc.**   Every trail is different and will require to be checked more or less often depending on many factors. These include usage level, the trail's grade and amount of infrastructure. There may also be variations throughout the year, needing more checks around large events or in bad weather for example.
iii)   **It is clear when each trail monitoring will be carried out.**   Specific dates should be planned for each monitoring assignment.
iv)   **It is clear who will carry out the trail monitoring.**   This can be a general grouping (e.g. TÚS scheme or local walking club) or can be specific persons.
v)   **Clear records are being kept of all trail monitoring activity.**   It should be possible to see what monitoring activity has been happening on the trail, and when. If done to plan, each one can simply be ticked off. Any amendments to the schedule should be noted.

4. **Trail Repairs & Upgrades** (Larger issues that cannot be quickly & easily solved)
i) **There is an appropriate system in place to plan and record trail repairs/upgrades, with suitable forms/templates.** Suitable personnel and documents are required to plan, carry out and keep records of all trail repair/upgrade activities.
ii) **The system includes prioritising Potential Safety Issues.** Any issue that may injure a walker should be dealt with as quickly as possible and the system should allow for this.
iii) **It is clear who will coordinate each trail repair/upgrade.** Someone should be assigned as responsible overall for each of these tasks.
iv) **Clear records are being kept of all trail repair/upgrade work.** It should be possible to see what repair/upgrade activity has been happening on the trail, and when. This should include work carried out internally or contracted externally.