

11 Mar 2026

Presentation to Municipality of Shelburne
State of Trails in Shelburne County by
the Woodlands Multiuse Trail Association (WMTA)
and the Shelburne County ATV Association (SCATVA)

1) Thank you for your invitation to present on the state of trails in Shelburne Country. I am Sherm Embree the Treasurer of the WMTA and a Director of the SCATVA.

With me to assist in today's presentation are: Dana Dares Secretary, and Don Leggett Project Manager Observation Platform.

Photo 1 - Map of trails www.atvans.wildapricot.org See Interactive map.

- 1) The SCATVA was established in 1996. **Since starting in June 2006 the WMTA, in close cooperation with the SCATVA have constructed eight shared multi use trails for a total of 78.3 kilometers.** We have replaced two bridges entirely and reconstructed 22 other bridges. It has been a busy 30 years. In each of the past several years we have had over 150 members. Our Facebook page has over 1900 followers and 4100 views in the past month. This is significantly greater participation in our trail association than any other bicycle, walker or hiker group membership in Shelburne County.

Photo 2 – Map of trails www.atvans.wildapricot.org Zoom in on Shelburne County.

- 2) **Our aim has been to complete, with others, a connected shared multi use trail around western Nova Scotia as parts of the Trans Canada Trail. We want to complete the trail across Shelburne County primarily on abandoned rail bed crown lands (125.8 kms).** 44.4km of that rail bed is in the Municipality of Barrington and is fully legally connected, developed, operational and maintained by us. This shared multiuse trail development to date would not have happened without the involvement of the OHV community. (Hand out “We Share Trails”)

- 3) In the Municipality of Shelburne , WMTA / SCATVA has completed 37.4 km of trail of the 81.4 km of rail bed. The Town (3.5 km), MDS (4.8km) and Black Loyalists (1.5 km) have developed some sections of the rail bed so 34.2 km have yet to be developed between Port Clyde and Islands Park.
- 4) **As of December 2024 we have achieved a legal connected OHV trail, by means of road trails, across Shelburne County with the exception of the Jordan River Trail bridge and the Roseway River Trail which are both under the jurisdiction of the MDS. A developed shared multiuse trail for walkers, cyclists, hikers, horse riders, etc has yet to be undertaken by an interested group.**
- 5) **We are also a part of the Trans Canada Trail with the Nova Scotia Trails Federation and other trail groups creating a continuous connected trail around the Western Loop of Nova Scotia.** The NS Trails Federation leads and coordinates trail organizations in trail development and the implementation of the Nova Scotia Provincial Trails Strategy.

Photo 3 – See Maintenance Plan Grant Distribution 2025 /26

- 6) **Funding for the trails has come by multiple grant applications, association memberships, fundraising and in kind labour.** Grants have come from:
 - NS CCTH RTEF (annual maintenance funds and up to 1/3 of eligible project costs),
 - NS OHV Trails Infrastructure Fund (annual maintenance funds and up to 50% of eligible project costs),
 - ATVANS Small Grant Fund,
 - Trans Canada Trail,
 - ACOA Innovative Communities Fund,
 - the Western Regional Economic Network for the “Get Sidetracked Project” connecting businesses and trail users,
 - from Municipalities, and
 - a large contribution of in kind volunteer work from users and Association members on all projects for construction and maintenance.

Our volunteers also organize recreational events, do litter pickup, and encourage proper trail use through our Etiquette program (hand out ATVANS Brochures). Our partners, the Shelburne County ATV Association, have taken on the role of setting the example for proper trail use, maintaining the trail, organizing recreation and fundraising. We are members of the Shelburne County Chamber of Commerce (and ex Tourism) Association and the NS Trails Federation.

- 7) In Shelburne Municipality we have completed the trail from east to west for 37.4 km including 13 bridges.

Photo 4 – Spa Rd finish

Photo 5 – Purney Brook Bridge

- 8) **Our main focus the past several years has been to contract our more trail maintenance** having spent the first fifteen years with trail users and volunteers doing trail maintenance and construction. In 2025/26 we spent \$40,785.03 on trail maintenance in MDS and \$135,964.72 in MoB. That includes \$84,847.60 in MoB for 18 km of capital work on trail recovery of damaged trail. In addition to those dollar expenditures we contributed over 800 hours of in-kind volunteer effort worth over \$23,000. That was a lot of grant and contract management. In the next year we hope to simplify our contract management having hired one contractor to do all the maintenance on all of our trails leaving repairs and capital work to other contractors and volunteers.
- 9) **In 2025, we connected fragmented rail bed across eastern Shelburne County. We now have a legal OHV route approved** from Clyde River to the Islands Park, from Roseway River to Jordan River and from Jordan River to the Queens County line. The Town of Shelburne approved an OHV road trail connecting trails at the north and south end of town in October 2024. NS DPW approved three OHV road Trails between Islands Park and Clyde River in December 2024. (4.17km at Port Clyde, 6.86 km at Churchover / Gunning Cove, and 400m at Brichtown Trestle Bridge.) We did not get NS DNRR approval to remove vehicle restrictions on three sections of rail bed that we applied for in April 2024. 1.32 km of rail bed at Port Clyde, 885meters at Brichtown and 853 meters at Roseway River Trail.)

10) Trail construction costs to build to provincial trail standards in 2021 were approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000 per kilometer plus bridge repairs. In 2024, trail redevelopment or resurfacing is between \$3,000 / km and \$12,000 / km depending upon the amount of resurfacing material required to be purchased. WMTA would like to thank MDS again for their contributions to past trail construction which included \$20,000 for Ogden Creek Bridge replacement, \$20,000 for East Jordan Trail construction, and \$20,000 annually for maintenance and capital costs.

PAUSE

Photos 6 and 7 – MDS maintenance activity

11) An example of resurfacing are our flood and fire damage repairs in 2024 at the Treasured Wetland Trail at Clements Pond and at the Barrington Bay Trailway costing \$68,425 for 4.7 km.

Photos 8 –resurfacing in MDS near Lockies Brook Bridge

PAUSE

12) With respect to maintenance, trail associations around the province have found it costs about \$500 per kilometer per year and some have standing contracts with contractors to do trail brush cutting, mowing and grading.

Photos 9 – Trail Maintenance - mowing

The MDS has their own trail maintenance experience with trail resurfacing and maintenance costs and contracting. In Shelburne County trail maintenance has been done until about six years ago primarily by users volunteering time, skills and equipment.

The trail and ATV Associations own a tractor, grader blades, two mowers, a brush cutting sickle bar and equipment storage container. Our volunteers are aging. **We are doing more and more maintenance by contract as funds are available.**

In the past several years we have used \$10,000 of MDS grant funds from your Gas Tax account for maintenance of the trail in MDS. If we get complementary grants approved we would like to use a further \$10,000 MDS Gas Tax Grant this year to enhance the trail facilities by building a rest stop wetland observation platform on the Jordan Branch Trail .

Photo 10 – Proposed Observation Platform

PAUSE

- 13) We have carried a heavy load for 25 years in trail development and maintenance and done it all with volunteers and grant approvals. We are stretched and losing capability. The community and municipality have been very supportive but we barely keep the trail to the standard we and the community wish. **We see the trails through MOB, MDS and the Town of Shelburne as community and municipal infrastructure resource just as are your other trails, the Welkum Park, Shelburne County Arena, and SRHS Community Use Facility. Trails are now part of the tourism infrastructure in western Nova Scotia. Trails are part of economic development in the Western REN (Regional Economic Network) among 11 municipalities as evidenced by their project to enhance trails called “Get Side Tracked”.**

Photos 11 and 12 - trail users

- 14) **We thank you for your past support and ask that you continue to support the trails just as you do other recreational and tourism infrastructure. Our community trails are a multimillion dollar asset investment managed by volunteers.** We need municipal support to fund ongoing maintenance and capital costs to keep this key recreation and tourism facility in good accessible condition for a wide variety of users. We would like municipal support to fund maintenance, trail improvements, enhancements, equipment and development.
- 15) **We are concerned about volunteer succession in our organization as are most volunteer organizations.** We need to find or support a trail manager as the responsibilities have grown to more than that

which a volunteer organization should have. We would appreciate discussing cooperative management responsibilities or partnerships as done in Digby County, Lunenburg Municipality and the Annapolis Valley.

13) **Specifically we have two requests of MDS (as for WMTA request to MoB):**

- a) **We would like MDS to continue their financial support for maintenance, development and capital improvements to the trail;**
- b) **The second request is that we would like MDS to help us manage and help complete the development of the remaining 34.2 km of shared multiuse trail across Shelburne County.**

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Photo 13 –Sable Wetland scene of walkers during Emily Forrest provincial walk about.

14) **In conclusion, we are close to having a legal OHV trail across Shelburne County in cooperation with MDS. We have constructed nearly 78.3 kilometers of high quality, safe multi use trail on mostly public crown land. WMTA also maintains that 78.3 kms of safe, high quality shared multi use trail contributing to the recreational, economic and tourism future of SW Nova Scotia. We see this as partial fulfillment of a provincial vision to have a core, shared, multi use trail around Western Nova Scotia as part of the Trans Canada Trail. We hope that Municipality of Shelburne will consider this vision for the benefit of the community in their future discussions.**

15) Thank you for this opportunity to present and discuss MDS support to trails. You are welcome to come on a trail ride. We will offer to take you on the trails anytime.

16) Your questions would be welcome.