

Hi Bonnie, Matt,

I went through the document and fast forwarded to the trail closure section. This section I believe should contain a process that will be followed before a trail is closed. E.g. consult with the trail developers, maintainers, neighbours, public. Who makes the final decision? Council? A committee?

On page 32 it jump straight into "When an existing trail or a section of trail is to be closed, the following steps should be taken." .

At our EEPAC meeting it was made clear that trail closure would not be arbitrary and decisions would not be made by one person. This is however not explained in the document. If it is then it needs to be moved to the trail closure section. It must be made clear to people what the process will be when making a trail closure decision and what opportunities they will have to participate in the decision or provide input.

Personally I understand that trails may need to be closed and rerouted; I am actually in full support of this proposal with condition that there is a documented decision making process.

I suggest some sort of protection to the existing TVTA trail system. These trails have been in place for 40 years with significant investment made by Londoners into its development and maintenance. The TVTA is not just any trail group. It is a significant stakeholder and I encourage that their concerns be addressed before this document goes to council. I believe a mistake was made by not including the TVTA in the drafting of these guidelines. Maybe there is some history here I am unaware of.

On a personal note I want to express my concern to the TVTA, the city and the Upper Thames about the lack of collaboration, conversation, sharing of best practices between the organizations. I have repeatedly stated to city staff and the TVTA president that the TVTA must not work in isolation. I am sure that if all parties came together trails through ESAs could be better managed and coexist with minimal damage to our ecology. No one person or organizations knows it all. One never knows when the removal of a tree or excessive cutting of the grass could be endangering a species. Some members of the TVTA view any city involvement/collaboration with suspicion. But I can honesty say from personal experience that once dialog is opened up one realizes that city staff are often helpful and truly want what is best.

I have no idea how to overcome the inertia with regards to the various organizations operating in isolation. Matt maybe you could get some sort of collaboration started.

Ravi Gupts  
TVTA Webmaster and former board member  
EEPAC  
London Citizen