

**THE TRANS CANADA TRAIL
AND WILD ROSE TRAIL SYSTEM**

RURAL ISSUES: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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Alberta
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

THE TRANS CANADA TRAIL AND WILD ROSE TRAIL SYSTEM

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I. BACKGROUND

National

- At 16,000 kilometres, the Trans Canada Trail will be the world's longest recreation trail, crossing all provinces and territories within Canada.
- The provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Yukon Territory, along with the federal government, have declared the Trans Canada Trail their official millennium project.
- In February 1999, CPR announced a donation of 1,618 kilometers of abandoned railway right-of-way across Canada to the Trans Canada Trail Foundation (TCTF).

Provincial

- In Alberta, the Trans Canada Trail will pass through over 100 municipalities as it traverses east to west and north to south, covering a distance of 2,100 kilometres.
- The Wild Rose Trail System is the proposed provincial trail system that will connect community to community and ultimately to the Trans Canada Trail.
- Both the Wild Rose Trail System and the Trans Canada Trail will utilize abandoned railway rights-of-way, road allowances, irrigation canal rights-of-way, rural road ditches, and other available lands to make their connections.
- Currently, Alberta is tied for last place with Saskatchewan in development of the Trans Canada Trail, while it is third highest in fundraising, behind Ontario and British Columbia.
- Over \$1,250,000 of the total \$7,933,000 raised across Canada has been donated by Albertans for the construction of the trail in Alberta.
- Four hundred kilometres of the abandoned railway right-of-way is located in rural Alberta. Approximately 140 kilometres are required for the Trans Canada Trail and the remainder is being considered for the Wild Rose Trail System.
- Alberta TrailNet is the provincial trail group with responsibility for managing the trail initiatives in Alberta. TrailNet's Board of 18 members consists of representatives from the Alberta Equestrian Federation, the Alberta Snowmobile Association, and the Alberta Bicycle Association, in addition to representatives from hiking and cross-country skiing.
- Alberta TrailNet's mandate includes improving the managed recreation access in rural Alberta. They believe that trails will bring social and health benefits to all users, as well as economic benefits to both the local communities and the province as a whole.

Relay 2000

- Relay 2000 is a national event designed to generate awareness of the Trans Canada Trail and to celebrate it. The Relay began February 14, 2000, in Tuktoyaktuk and will run through to September 9, 2000. This event involves the relay, by groups of six to ten persons, of a vessel of water from each ocean - Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific - along the designated trail routes of the Trans Canada Trail, to a commemorative fountain in the National Capital Region (Ottawa).
- The Trans Canada Trail Foundation, ParticipACTION, and the federal Millennium Bureau are partners in this event. Alberta TrailNet's role has been to indicate the preferred routing of this relay in Alberta. The Trans Canada Trail Foundation and ParticipACTION adhere to that routing as closely as possible, and identify alternate routes if the preferred route is not accessible.
- The Trans Canada Trail Foundation and ParticipACTION are also coordinating activities across the country involving communities through which the water relay passes.

II. GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is the Trans Canada Trail Project?

The Trans Canada Trail will be the longest trail in the world. It will stretch 16,000 kilometres from coast to coast to coast. It will exist in all 10 provinces and three territories. It will support the core activities of hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, equestrian use, and snowmobiling, where those uses are feasible and desirable.

2. How much of it is in Alberta?

Approximately 1/6th of the total project, or 2,100 kilometres, is in Alberta. The Alberta portion consists of an east-west leg joining Saskatchewan and British Columbia, and a connecting north-south leg to northern British Columbia and the Territories.

3. Who is Alberta TrailNet?

The Alberta TrailNet Society is a volunteer charitable organization whose aim is the development and promotion of trails in Alberta. In addition, they are the provincial trail group recognized by the Trans Canada Trail Foundation as its representative and charged with completing the Trans Canada Trail in Alberta.

4. Why does the Alberta Government support the Trans Canada Trail and trails in general?

At a 1995 conference of Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Recreation and Sport, held in Grande Prairie, the Ministers unanimously recognized that physical inactivity represents a major health risk, and that developing strategies to make Canadians more active is a priority for government action.

As a result of this conference, a framework for action was developed and the province created a provincial strategy for active living that would significantly enhance the quality of life for Albertans. An Active Living Task Force was established to consult with Albertans and present a plan of action for the government. The Task Force held 18 community focus group meetings across the province and generated 23 recommendations that became the core of the Active Living Task Force Strategy. The community focus group meetings resulted in a clear consensus for the need to develop trails and linear parks as part of the opportunity infrastructure for active recreation.

The development of the provincial trail plan, known as the Wild Rose Trail System, is a critical component in the planning, organization, and implementation of a province-wide trail network. The Trans Canada Trail will form the backbone or main trunk of a many-branched trail system linking community to community and opportunity to opportunity.

5. Why does the Trans Canada Trail and trails in general want to use abandoned railway or other existing rights-of-way?

Abandoned railway lines offer a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities. Characteristically, these rights-of-way offer the perfect setting for recreation use. Relatively mild grades, flat surfaces, natural landscapes, picturesque surroundings, and hundreds of kilometers of primarily unused greenway corridors provide a superb

opportunity for trail development. These rights-of-way also pass through many Alberta communities providing easy access to high rural and urban population centres.

Irrigation canals, with their associated low use service roads, offer ready made trail pathways that can pass through attractive rural landscapes, often on provincially owned public lands.

Undeveloped road allowances are another opportunity for trail development, where access is often open to the public.

6. Why does the Provincial Government support Alberta TrailNet and how much is their annual funding?

Alberta TrailNet is the provincial not-for-profit agency in Alberta that has taken on the task of developing both the Trans Canada Trail and Wild Rose Trail System. Their Board consists of representatives of major trail stakeholder groups, and is a natural partner for the province to help carry out its Active Living Strategy.

Alberta TrailNet receives an operating grant from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife Foundation each fiscal year. In 2000, the amount of funding is set at \$50,000. The Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife Foundation provides a similar type of grant to 107 other sport, recreation, and active living associations across Alberta.

If Alberta TrailNet did not exist, trail development in Alberta would still proceed but in a much more haphazard, uncoordinated, and unplanned fashion without a provincial vision or provincial standards.

7. What other kinds of private and government support exist for the project?

The Trans Canada Trail Foundation has raised approximately \$1.3 million in Alberta from corporate donations, metre, and merchandise sales. It is estimated that over 18,000 Albertans have purchased a metre of the Trail. These donations are spread almost equally between rural and urban communities. The donation of 404 kilometres of abandoned rail lines by CPR represents a further significant private contribution.

The federal government has provided a grant of several million dollars to the Trans Canada Trail Foundation through the Millennium Bureau, to prepare for the trail opening in September 2000 and to engage trail consultants across the country in finalizing the route.

The Alberta Government has taken several actions supporting trail development including:

- passing an all party Motion expressing support for the development of a province-wide trail plan on May 20, 1997.
- endorsing at the Standing Policy level, the province-wide trail plan, including the Trans Canada Trail, prepared by Alberta TrailNet and entitled the Wild Rose Trail Plan, in August 1998.
- declaring the Trans Canada Trail a provincial millennium project on December 11, 1998.

- as part of the 2000 provincial budget, granting Alberta TrailNet \$1.1 million for construction of the Trans Canada Trail in Alberta.

8. Will all of the abandoned rail lines be on the TCT or the Wild Rose Trail System?

No. Alberta TrailNet is assessing all 14 lines for their trail potential and ability to contribute to the TCT or Wild Rose Trail System initiative. To date, it appears the Acme and Langdon lines (Cosway area) and Suffield Line (Vauxhall east), will be on the TCT mainline and several others may be used as part of a broader connecting Wild Rose Trail System. Of the 404 kilometers gifted by the CPR, it would appear that only half will have any trail potential.

9. What will happen to the rights-of-way that are surplus?

The abandoned rail lines were donated to benefit the Trans Canada Trail. Some will be used directly for the TCT, others will be sold with the proceeds being used to build TCT in other locations. The CPR received a substantial tax receipt for all of these lands, and the Trans Canada Trail Foundation is obligated to not “giving away” the land as if it had no value. Alberta TrailNet, on behalf of the TCTF, is exploring options regarding the disposal of the surplus lands.

10. What will happen to the surplus station grounds and other former rail lands within communities?

Alberta TrailNet recognizes that the abandoned rail lands along the right-of-way have significant economic potential for adjacent communities and that they can be a detriment to the community if neglected. The TCTF is responsible for selling any surplus lands. Alberta TrailNet has indicated that they are willing to recommend selling surplus lands once the amount of land needed for the trail and trailhead are identified. They want to encourage communities to explore possible uses for the lands, uses that will enhance the trail through the community by supplying goods and services.

11. What if no trail operator group is found in our area to develop and manage the trail?

Alberta TrailNet and the Trans Canada Trail Foundation have indicated that trail corridors will be banked and the lands set aside for the future when a trail operator emerges. The Trans Canada Trail Foundation and Alberta TrailNet will continue to manage the rights-of-way, looking after weeds, closing off access, posting appropriate signage, etc., until that time.

12. Will the trail owners have to pay taxes?

The *Municipal Government Act* gives municipalities the right to exempt not-for-profit groups from paying taxes. This will be an individual municipal decision.

13. Will the trail right-of-way be used for any other purpose?

Trail managers have demonstrated that trails can host other linear uses, including water and gas pipelines and fibre optic cables to name a few. This sharing has resulted in significant savings in land assembly for utility companies and can minimize disruption to adjacent land uses. The trail can also provide access for utility service vehicles, and provide limited access to homes and fields for farmers who have traditionally used the rights-of-way for that purpose.

14. What are the benefits of trails?

By promoting active living, every investment in trails saves dollars in health care costs. Trails are becoming the recreation experience of choice amongst an ever-increasing population of Albertans of all age groups. People who enjoy hiking, skiing, cycling, horseback riding, or snowmobiling all use trails. The average long distance trail user spends \$40 per day locally. The 800 kilometre Bruce Trail in Ontario supports 200 direct and 800 indirect jobs within 10 kilometres of the trail. Snowmobilers spend close to \$200 million annually in Alberta alone. Most long distance trail users share a respect and love of the land unique to themselves and landowners. Trails connect communities to each other, allow users to interact with nature, and offer a peaceful setting for sharing family experiences.

15. How many people will be using the Trans Canada Trail in my area?

There is no accurate estimate of the potential users of the Trans Canada Trail through any region of the province. The majority of users will be local residents and people from the urban centres. In addition, it is expected that foreign tourists will actively seek out the more attractive parts of the long distance trail to experience rural Canada.

16. What is Alberta TrailNet doing about landowner concerns and the potential problems with trails?

In 1997 and 1998, Alberta TrailNet held six trail workshops across the province inviting landowners, trail users, and interest groups. Then in 1999, they attended a general meeting of landowners and heard their concerns first hand. Also in 1999, they held their first meeting of what has become a permanent trail stakeholders group. This Trails Advisory Council is made up of not only provincial trail user groups, but also those farm organizations and municipal agencies that are concerned about the impact of trails. This Council is reviewing many of the issues of a provincial trail system and has approved the trail code of behaviour called "Use Respect".

Alberta TrailNet has also met with representatives of landowner groups and the municipalities along the proposed trail route to better understand their concerns and solicit solutions. Over the last six months, they have also met one-on-one with adjacent landowners to hear their specific concerns and explore compromise solutions to individual property owner's problems.

Alberta TrailNet is currently planning a series of local workshops with small groups of landowners to explore solutions to current landowner concerns and to carry on the dialogue initiated in their one on one interviews.

17. What is Alberta TrailNet hearing?

TrailNet is hearing that rural residents are concerned about whether the trail operators will carry sufficient insurance, their liability as landowners, whether standards of behaviour will be set for trail users, that users will be monitored, who they can contact to report a concern, and what TrailNet will do about fencing and ensuring their livestock and irrigation works are protected and their farm operations are not negatively impacted. Over the last several months, Alberta TrailNet has been formulating specific policies to deal with these common issues. These policies are being brought forward to the provincial Trails Advisory Council for review.

III. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A. LIABILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY CONCERNS

18. When a trail user strays onto my private property, damages property, sets a fire and/or is injured or killed, what is my liability?

Both the *Petty Trespass Act* and the *Trespass to Property Act* create offences for persons who enter onto land without permission or without having the right to enter. Under the *Occupier's Liability Act*, if a landowner invites someone onto his land, the occupier of premises owes a duty to every visitor to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using premises for the purpose for which he is invited or permitted to be there.

The province is currently exploring amendments to its *Occupiers' Liability Act* to further reduce the landowners liability for recreation users. In addition, the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* establishes regulations in regard to fire control, prevention, and education in the forested and prairie lands in Alberta.

Alberta TrailNet and the Province do not believe that landowners should be responsible for the safety of recreationists on their land. Both have worked consistently over the last three years to have the *Occupier's Liability Act* changed to reduce the duty owed by landowners to visitors. In the meantime, the Trans Canada Trail Foundation has secured a 10.0 million dollar insurance policy that covers adjacent landowners, as well as trail operating groups against liability (excluding landowner negligence). This will not cover property damage, so landowners should treat trails the same as adjacent roadways and seek property insurance if they feel it would be prudent.

Ownership of the trails by a trail group or municipality focuses any liability on that organization, while leaving the adjacent landowner with less exposure. The risk is small compared to that resulting from regular use of hundreds of kilometres of gravel roads.

19. Who will be responsible if a fire is accidentally started on the trail, how will it be kept from spreading, and who will put it out?

Whoever sets the fire will be responsible. Local trail operators will be asked to work with the local fire department in developing definite plans for the prevention and control of wild fires. A cultivated strip of land beside the trail may be all that is needed to prevent grass fires from getting out of hand. A fire ban, including smoking, is another tool for fire prevention, and the local trail operator will have the authority to close the trail to all traffic if the risk of fire warrants such action.

20. What happens to the trail if the local group folds? Will I or my neighbours get stuck looking after it?

If the local trail group folds, the trail, lacking regular maintenance will gradually revert to its former unmanaged condition. There is no expectation that a rural municipality would take over the operation unless they so desire. Alberta TrailNet is proposing a formal process by which the right-of-way would be preserved intact for another group to manage as a trail some time in the future. In the meantime, a fund is to be established

to ensure that the trail is formally closed by installing appropriate signs and barricades to restrict access.

B. LAND OPERATOR CONCERNS

21. Will I still be able to access my lands on both sides of the trail and drive my equipment and livestock down the old rail bed to get to my fields?

Under the federal *Transportation Act*, CPR was required to guarantee a right-of-farm crossing between a farmer's parcels of land that had been intersected by the railway line. Upon abandonment, the rights-of-way were no longer covered by federal or provincial jurisdiction, though they have been transferred with the titles to the Trans Canada Trail Foundation.

Less than 15 percent of the Trans Canada Trail in Alberta will use former rail grades. Other corridors, such as wilderness routes, park trails, canal service roads and section roads, all manage the problem of intersecting fields. Alberta TrailNet is willing to locate crossing locations where they are needed and make arrangements to allow continued access. They have agreed to meet or exceed previous access arrangements provided by CPR. Fenced livestock crossings can be created by placing two cattle guards across the trail, leaving a crossing between. Equipment crossings will be identified by signs warning trail users, and the former rail embankment can be lowered making easier vehicle crossings while adding variety to the trail.

22. I have not needed fences for my cattle in the past. Will I have to fence the entire right-of-way just to keep trail users out of my land? Who has to pay for the fence?

Recreationists presently wander across private and public property where there is no approved place for rural recreation. When a safe route is designated and the trail well maintained, experience with established trails indicate that people rarely leave the trail.

Farmers have historically been responsible for fencing to keep their cattle contained within their property. In general, Alberta TrailNet does not see a need to separate trail users from cattle. However, the local trail operator may wish to do this based on site-specific conditions such as the presence of bulls and calving areas. Alberta TrailNet has indicated a willingness to share fencing costs where necessary.

The *Line Fence Act* defines cost-sharing responsibility for fencing to whoever benefits, and has an arbitration process under the *Arbitration Act* to settle disputes. The activities of dogs, hunters, and other undesirable users can be regulated by local municipal bylaw under the *Municipal Government Act* and the control of livestock, liability for not closing gates, and stray dogs are regulated under the provincial *Stray Animal Act*.

23. How will the trail operator keep people from throwing waste materials into the irrigation canal behind my farm or damaging my irrigation pumps?

Many of Alberta's irrigation canals are public owned lands that are currently accessible to anyone who wishes to travel there. To our knowledge garbage being thrown into the canal or damaging pumping systems has never been a significant problem.

The trail operators will be responsible for garbage removal and appropriate locations will be identified for garbage bins and toilets. In addition experience has shown that well maintained and managed trails encourage use which reduces inappropriate behavior. The proposed trail watch program will also assist in this area.

24. How do I know that in future years, my farming operation won't get restricted or closed down because of trail user's complaints?

Many of the activities that occur in farm settings are exactly the reason rural trails are so attractive to other people. It is an opportunity to remind people of their rural roots and to demonstrate the importance of agriculture in modern life.

To protect the farmer, the *Agricultural Operations Practices Act* provides an institutional framework for resolving conflicts between agricultural producers and the urban/rural non-farmer when the farmer's activities cause or create a nuisance. In addition, municipalities, in their land-use bylaw under the *Municipal Government Act*, can regulate the type and extent of land use on and adjacent to the trail.

C. CRIME AND POLICING CONCERNS

25. I am already having problems with people accessing my land out of sight of travelled areas off the abandoned rail lines or irrigation rights-of-way. Is the trail going to increase the amount of crime, cattle rustling, vandalism, and other types of unwanted behaviour on my land and in my community?

Many criminal activities are already occurring along little used rights-of-way in rural areas. The proper planning and management of a trail on these lands will greatly reduce the chances of crime and other inappropriate behaviour. Barriers at the entrance to the trail will prevent unwanted vehicles from accessing the trail, and trail widths and gates will be used to further impede motorized access in areas where it is not allowed. Experience has shown that a frequently used, managed trail that is clearly defined, accessible, well maintained, and monitored will greatly reduce incidences of vandalism and crime.

TrailNet has been encouraging landowners to report incidents on the right-of-way promptly to their 1-800 number, so that they can accurately assess the nature and extent of problems and develop remedial measures. To do this they need reliable records of incidents in the first place.

Practical experience with parks across the continent show that vandals rarely move far from their vehicles. Support facilities such as toilets, etc., will be kept a short distance from trailheads to reduce the temptation to wander.

Education of trail users is another important component. The provincial Trails Advisory Council has recently developed a code of conduct called "Use Respect", modeled after the provincial public lands program of the same name. These rules for behaviour have been written for all trails across the province and will be supplemented for specific circumstances.

In addition, trail users will be informed of appropriate behaviour by signs and messages in trail guides and on maps. These will be enforced in a low-key manner, by having other users self regulate and monitor the trail. This approach is similar to the Rural Crime Watch program, which believes that more people watching an area will result in less crime. Local trail operators will be responsible for ensuring users are aware of exactly what behaviour is acceptable and what is not.

26. The RCMP does not have enough staff to adequately patrol our area now. In some areas, such as the privately owned rights-of-way, they may not have jurisdiction. How will they be able to effectively patrol the trails?

The Trans Canada Trail Foundation is currently working with the RCMP at the national and provincial levels to seek a positive solution to enforcement problems. A volunteer patrol with proper training and equipment has been effective in other parts of the country. Alberta TrailNet currently provides a toll-free number (1-877-9TRAILS) to report any problems to their Edmonton office. While they recognize that this is not adequate for problems “in progress”, it will allow farmers to report problems and have the local trail operator organization attend to repair any damage.

Criminal activities are regulated under the federal Criminal Code of Canada and other undesirable activities under provincial statutes such as the *Petty Trespass Act* and *Trespass to Property Act*. In addition, municipalities are given the authority under the *Municipal Government Act* to enact and enforce municipal bylaws regarding trail user behavior on private and public lands.

27. Will ATVs be allowed on the Trans Canada Trail?

The Trans Canada Trail Foundation does not endorse the use of ATVs on the Trans Canada Trail. However, they recognize that in some areas of the country this is the only practical means of traversing long distances and have left it up to the local trail operators to decide. Alberta TrailNet has decided that ATV use will be restricted to the portion of the trail north of Athabasca. There will be no sanctioned use of ATVs in the remainder of the province.

D. TRAIL OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE CONCERNS

28. Who is going to look after the trail once it is built? Will the local landowners or municipality have to take care of maintenance when the local trail group doesn't do an adequate job?

Trail management is a much simpler matter than maintenance of a local ice rink, which many community groups currently do. Trail operators will be responsible for picking up garbage, removing waste, ensuring fences are fixed and conducting general maintenance.

Alberta TrailNet is not primarily in the business of building or operating trails. Their role is to identify trail operators to build, maintain, and operate the trail. This process is

working successfully around the province and in other provinces for other components of the Trans Canada Trail. Before a trail operator is allowed to proceed, they will have to develop an operating plan specifying how they intend to manage and maintain the trail. They will have to also indicate a basis for supporting their maintenance activities.

Alberta TrailNet, with the support of Alberta Community Development, is producing a manual that will show local groups how to plan, build, and maintain a trail. Local groups are encouraged to form partnerships with other groups, perhaps recreation associations from a larger centre, to ensure the necessary financial resources are available. Trails often become a community project, with many individuals and community groups making contributions.

If the trail operator group ceases to exist, Alberta TrailNet proposes a formal process by which the right-of-way would be preserved intact for future groups to use as a trail. In the meantime, a fund would ensure that the trail would be formally closed by changing signs and installing barriers to prevent access.

29. Who will take care of weeds?

Alberta TrailNet and the Trans Canada Trail Foundation recognize that the control of noxious weeds on the land under their control is a legal requirement. This year, the TCTF sprayed weeds on the former CPR rights-of-way in a number of areas where access was not blocked by cross fences. This maintenance activity will be continued as required until a trail operator is in place to continue the management of the trail. At that time it will become the trail operator's responsibility.

30. What control does the provincial government currently have over the development, maintenance, and use of trails?

There is no legislation defining the standards of construction, maintenance, or operation specifically for trails on private or public lands in Alberta. On Crown lands, provision for proper management of public lands, including water crossings, falls under the general provisions of the *Public Lands Act*. The *Public Lands Act* specifies conditions and terms of use for such things as staying in designated areas, disposal of garbage, surface disturbance, and fencing of Crown lands. The *Municipal Government Act* gives municipalities authority to establish bylaws for general municipal purposes, including ensuring proper drainage/culverts, collection of garbage, and land use.

Off-highway vehicles are regulated under the provincial *Off-Highway Vehicle Act*, while the *Water Act* sets standards for bridge and culvert crossings and their impact on watercourses.

The provincial government is exploring the option of legislation or a Provincial Trails Act which would specify the standards of trail management, reduce landowner liability, provide a mechanism for defining and enforcing suitable trail behaviour, and ensure trails are properly maintained in perpetuity.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

31. Who is going to be responsible for the cleanup of old fencing, ties, steel plates and other contamination along the right-of-way and on the old station grounds?

Under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, the former rail line operator is responsible for acquiring a reclamation certificate on all rail lines abandoned since September 1, 1993. The Act is clear in specifying that the operator of the railway is responsible for re-mediation of contaminants and reclamation of the land, and is liable until a reclamation certificate is received from the province. This Act also supports and promotes the protection, enhancement, and wise use of the environment. Lines abandoned between August 1978 and September 1993 do not require a reclamation certificate, but companies must meet the intent of the Act's criteria. Lines abandoned before August 1978 do not need a reclamation certificate.

The provincial government will ensure that the railway companies comply with the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. This Act stipulates that the responsibility remains with the railway even after the lands are disposed of.

32. The trail corridor through my property passes through environmentally sensitive lands that will not take much traffic of any kind. How are these lands and wildlife going to be protected?

One of the attractions of the railway grade is that it already exists above the surrounding lands. The grades were made to last and even with most of the ballast removed, are attractive trail surfaces. Trail users will be encouraged, through signs, fencing, boundary markers and the promotion of trail etiquette, to remain on the trail. In areas of special sensitivity, interpretative signs will be used to educate the trail user on the significance of the landscape and the importance of "treading lightly". Appreciation of the wildlife and local ecology are one of the main reasons that trail users will be on the trail in the first place.

In addition, provincial legislation deals with many of the issues of development in sensitive areas. The *Water Act* regulates the impact of development along shorelines, the *Forest Act* prohibits persons from damaging the forest in any way, and the *Soil Conservation Act* allows for the sustainability of agricultural land resources by discouraging practices which cause soil degradation.

F. LOSS OF PRIVACY CONCERNS

33. I live in the country because that is the lifestyle I have chosen. How can the province or the trail group guarantee that my privacy won't be continually violated by trail users?

The Provincial Government, Alberta TrailNet and the Trans Canada Trail Foundation all recognize that the most difficult impact of the trail to mitigate will be the sense of a loss of privacy by rural landowners. They do feel, however, that the education of trail users, plus the posting of "Use Respect" signs at critical points, will encourage trail users to respect the privacy of adjacent landowners, except in the case of emergencies. Alberta

TrailNet is also exploring the possibility of tree planting programs to screen farms from the trail. In extremely invasive cases, Alberta TrailNet has indicated that they would consider relocating the trail right-of-way away from the residence if the landowner can offer a comparable route across his land.

Trail users will be encouraged to carry cellular phones, with extra batteries and toilet facilities will be strategically located along the route and at trail access points to discourage trespassing. The *Petty Trespass Act* and the *Trespass to Premises Act* apply to Crown and all other lands, except land under grazing lease. Both Acts create offences for persons who enter onto land without permission or otherwise having the right to enter. Trespassing and its consequences will have to be posted and the “Use Respect” program promoted.

34. What plans are being made for emergency services in the event someone is hurt on the portion of trail that runs through my land? Am I expected to help if someone is injured?

The trail adjacent to private property will be a lot less dangerous than the local gravel road that runs by many farms in this province. Trail operators will be required to have emergency procedures in place. While serious accidents are not anticipated, in the event one does occur, the landowners responsibility would be no different than if there was an accident on one of the local roads near your residence. In addition, cell phones and Air Ambulance has reduced accident response time considerably.

G. BENEFIT AND LACK OF SUPPORT CONCERNS

35. What is in this for me except more hassles?

The provincial Government, Alberta TrailNet and the Trans Canada Trail Foundation believe that the benefits of a national endeavor of this sort can be immense, and not only produce economic gain for rural Alberta, but encourage social health and heritage benefits for a broad spectrum of Albertans. They see this benefit extending to millions of users across the country, and positively impacting thousands of small rural communities through improved economic opportunities.

The benefits to rural landowners are not as direct for the most part, but could include establishing bed and breakfasts, offering trail riding and touring opportunities, or promoting and selling produce to trail users. A trail may also open up new options for accessing land, provide increased equestrian and recreational opportunities, enhance the rural crime watch program and possibly create greater means for dealing with fire. The exposure of urban residents to the rural way of life can be an important spin-off that could lead to greater support for agricultural initiatives and closer ties between differing lifestyles.

36. Is there any support in Alberta for the Trans Canada Trail?

Over 18,000 Albertans have invested in the Trans Canada Trail by purchasing metres of trail and raising a total of approximately \$1.3 million. A recent cross-Canada survey by Processus Marketing demonstrated that in Alberta, 73% of those surveyed felt that the

Trans Canada Trail was a good to excellent idea, 15.6% felt it was not a good idea, and 11.4% were undecided. Of the first category, 67.2% of rural Albertans expressed support, while 76.2% of urban Albertans were supportive.