

Park-To-Park Trail Association

Marketing Plan



2004

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

1. Increase Park-To-Park Trail Memberships. This will be measured by:
 - increasing general membership by 40 in 1 year
 - increasing business membership by 10 in 1 year
 - increasing corporate sponsorship by 1 in 1 year
2. Increase public awareness of Park-To-Park Trail. This will be measured by tracking membership, participation in workshops/events/activities and by utilizing media channels. Park-To-Park has developed a system for monthly tracking inquiries regarding the trail via email, website visitors, phone, mail, personal contacts, walk-ins and other (events, workshops and activities).
3. Promote cultural heritage and natural environment. This will be achieved by incorporating information into our promotional correspondence such as Pathways, brochures, presentations, displays and signage.
4. Endorse Benefits of Healthy/Active Lifestyles. By promoting the benefits, more people will become involved in trail activities which can then be measured by attendance at workshops/events/activities and by doing surveys to record trail usage.
5. Continue To Foster Community Pride and Unity. This will be achieved through educating the public about Park-To-Park Trail and encouraging support of trail development in communities along the trail. Developing community and group workshops/events/activities/projects will strengthen community pride and unity.
6. To Continue Developing and Maintaining Partnerships that will benefit Park-To-Park Trail in the areas of financial support, construction of trail and public awareness.
7. Review Marketing Plan annually, update with new information and expand as Park-To-Park Trail evolves.



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2.0 TARGET MARKET

Trail activities appeal to a large variety of people and interest groups from infants to seniors; individuals to families; organized to spontaneous events and from easy to challenging. It would be accurate to suggest that we have a large, segmented target market consisting of Tourists and Local Community Members. Within these two target markets are secondary markets consisting of existing trail users, different age groups and diverse interest groups.

Within the Tourist market, we would be looking at meeting tourists trail experience needs on a short term, but perhaps repetitive basis. Tourists are looking for a variety of events including new experiences, nature excursions, challenging and adventure activities and guided group activities.

The local market will also include a variety of different trail user needs. Promoting the trail as a four season, multi-use trail will have appeal to a wide variety of people and needs. As the trail will cover 230 kms and include 10 municipalities, it would also be accurate to suggest that there are different target areas as well. What may work at one end of the trail may not work at the other end. Different activities/events/workshops would have to be designated according to geographical area, age group, tourist attraction and municipal designation of trail usages.

An idea for future clarification of target market and trends in trail uses include researching demographics, psychographics and implementing surveys to gather information.



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3.0 STRATEGIES

3.1 Increase Park-To-Park Trail Memberships

The main objective would be recruiting new members to help support the development of the trail and maintain programs associated with Park-To-Park Trail. This would be achieved by developing a number of trail activities that would appeal to a vast number of trail users. The event/activity coordinator would have to be flexible and versatile in order to meet the needs of the people using the trails and also up-to-date on current trends in trail usage.

Membership dollars are targeted towards trail development. This continues to be an important factor in the development of the Park-To-Park Trail. Projects (events, workshops, activities) which will be funded by membership dollars will be decided by the Executive Committee. This will assist in the development of realistic goals for increasing memberships. To reach the goals set out in the Objectives, a variety of creative strategies will need to be implemented. Park-To-Park Trail needs to be more visible. This can be achieved by increasing public awareness and by word of mouth. Reaching the tourist industry can be achieved by brochure distribution and advertised trail activities. Cost for membership is:

Student - \$5.00	Individual - \$10.00
Family - \$20.00	Group/Business - \$50.00

General Membership:

Park-To-Park Trail currently has 40 members. The targeted goal for 2003/2004 is to increase membership by 100%. This means 40 new members by October 2004.

Park-To-Park Trail will recruit new members through personal contacts, advertising campaigns and the Website. Members will recruit family and friends to become members. Incentives will be offered to existing and new members (buy one membership, get one free or half price, sign up three friends and receive a Park-To-Park crest). Presentations to local groups and organizations would educate local people about the trail and encourage membership to help support development and maintenance of the trail in their area. Members will be recruited through partnership arrangements. Examples of this would be to approach bird watching groups and have them do a guided tour on the Park-To-Park Trail. Staff would then have the opportunity to approach participants to become a member to continue organized trail events. Membership costs will also be incorporated into packaged event deals and offered to participants. As the trail reaches completion and more activities are available, discounts for members can be offered on merchandise and activities.

Business Membership:

Current Business Membership for Park-To-Park Trail is 2. The targeted goal for 2003/2004 is to increase this number by 10, totalling 12 Business Memberships by October 2004. The cost for a Business Membership is \$50.00.



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Packages are being developed with information about Park-To-Park, allowing staff to initiate business contacts. The packages will include a Park-To-Park Trail brochure, brief summary of the project, partnerships, history and future development plans and benefits of becoming a business member. Benefits include:

- Support trail development
- Promotion of Business through advertising on the Park-To-Park Trail Website, currently receiving approximately 400 hits per month
- Receive quarterly newsletter - "Pathways", keeping members updated on trail development and upcoming events
- Partner with Park-To-Park Trail to promote healthy, active living
- Invitation to Annual General Meeting with voting privileges (one vote per business)
- An opportunity for community involvement, fostering community pride and unity
- Support environmental, historical and cultural attributes along the trail
- Stimulate economic development opportunities through trail development

Staff will deliver packages to potential business partners and meetings with business owners will be arranged to discuss membership and partnership opportunities. Businesses to target first would be ones that had a potential interest and/or would be a benefit to/for the Park-To-Park Trail project (Bike Stores, Outdoor Equipment Retailers, resorts, etc). Businesses could also sponsor a section of trail and be recognized through a sponsor/donation program. As the Seguin Recreational Trail is the spine of the Park-To-Park Trail system and currently the only section of trail being promoted as open, this would be the most logical place to target for sponsorship. For \$100.00, businesses could sponsor 1KM of trail along the Seguin Trail and have their business advertised on trail head signs and the Park-To-Park Trail Website. Stickers or plaques could be provided to display in the stores to inform customers of their support of the trail.

Corporate Sponsorship:

Corporate Sponsorship would allow Park-To-Park to seek larger dollars amounts for the support of trail development and special projects. Potential corporations will be identified by the Marketing Committee and specific packages will be developed, outlining the Park-To-Park Trail project and benefits of sponsorship (much the same information as is included in the Business Membership Package). Information that may be required by corporations before considering sponsorship are financial statements, committees, charitable status and audited statements. Corporations may provide ongoing financial support while others may offer short term support for specific projects. Both would be beneficial to the support of Park-To-Park.

Businesses and corporations would be beneficial to Park-To-Park Trail by way of financial contributions, donations, equipment use, promotion of the trail and partnership opportunities. Park-To-Park Trail would provide updates on trail development, Internet links to the website, stimulate economic development opportunities and community involvement.



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3.2 Increase Public Awareness of Park-To-Park Trail

There are a variety of media channels to utilize in creating public awareness of the trail. This will allow both the local and tourist market to be covered.

INFORMATION BROCHURE: Park-To-Park Trail currently has a full color information brochure which is mass distributed on an annual basis. They are sent to or distributed at Government Agencies (municipal and provincial), Provincial Parks, Information Centres, community events, stakeholder/interest groups, cottage associations and organizations. Throughout the year, brochures are distributed to individuals by staff, sent to businesses by mail or phone request, included in information packages and handed out at special events. As of 2003, tracking has only been done on mass mail outs. Development of a tracking sheet to track ongoing distribution will help determine high volume areas (**SEE APPENDIX I**). In the year 2003, Park-To-Park Trail received requests from 12 Ontario Travel and Information Centres asking that brochures be sent to various locations across Ontario totalling approximately 1000 brochures. Over the next year, it is recommended that staff/volunteers do follow up phone calls to various locations to determine the success of brochure distribution. With 10,000 brochures being distributed over a 1-1.5 year time frame, Park-To-Park Trail did not receive very many new memberships. Trends in brochure design and content needs to be explored.

EVENT ADVERTISING: Currently, promotional material (flyers, brochures and posters) for events is distributed to members, community bulletin boards, Ontario Parks, municipal offices and local businesses by staff and event volunteers. Information is also available on the Park-To-Park Trail Website, Community TV and local radio stations advertising details of upcoming events for Park-To-Park Trail. Submissions are made to local newspapers featuring the events before and the success afterwards.

PATHWAYS: Quarterly distribution (500 each quarter) of the newsletter "Pathways" are currently sent out to Park-To-Park members, board of directors, municipal offices, provincial parks, local businesses, information packages and government offices. Articles featured in the newsletter focus on trail development, events, merchandise and membership. As the trail develops, topics featured will include historical/cultural/natural information, benefits of using the trail and topics of interest (mushrooms, flora and fauna and bird watching, etc).

STATIC EXPO DISPLAY BOARD: The static expo display board will continue to be set up at various locations which include but are not limited to trade shows (Home, Garden and Cottage shows and Outdoor shows), Conferences (Ecotourism and Trails related), Special/Community events (Winter/Summer Fests, Relay 2000), Information Centres and Libraries. A variety of information is available on the display board; Mandate and Goals, membership, merchandise and contact information, concept map and Seguin Trail map, pictures (trail development, historical,



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events, trail scenery) and upcoming events. In the year 2003, the display board was available at 13 events:

Huntsville Public Library	Kearney Dog Sled Races	OTC Conference, Sarnia
Parry Sound Info Centre	Foley Mush Rush	Bicycle Safety Rodeo (Killbear)
Dragon Boat Festival (Parry Sound)	Blossoms & Blackfly Exhibition (South River)	Municipal Association Meeting (Pointe Au Baril)
BOCC-ATV Spring Jam	Trail Awareness Days (P.S. Mall)	Orrville Community Centre

The target for the following year is to increase the number of locations to 18 that the display board is scheduled for. This would include libraries, information centres, community centres, municipal offices and special events and conferences attended by staff. It is intended to have the display board available in all communities throughout the year, to gain exposure for the trail. Possible locations for 2004 include:

Huntsville Public Library	Emsdale-Credit Union	Bobby Orr Community Centre
Parry Sound Public Library	Dragon Boat Festival	Bicycle Safety Rodeo (Killbear)
Dwight Public Library	West Parry Sound Health Centre	ATV Events
Parry Sound Info Centre	Leslie M. Frost Centre	Resorts
AHIC Centre	West Parry Sound Museum	Parry Sound "Wellness Days"
Kearney Dog Sled Races	Scarborough Outdoor Education Centre	

PRESENTATIONS/MEETINGS: Public presentations and meetings (two Public Service Groups per year) will be held to address the public's questions and concerns. Other presentations include municipal deputations (twice per year), annual general meetings, information sessions and open houses (consultations, specials topics and route planning). Presentations and meetings are held in all seasons to cover both the local and tourist market. There are many events occurring in summer months such as park events, community events, cottage association meetings and recreational activities that can be utilized to increase public awareness.

WEBSITE: During the 2003 year, the Park-To-Park Trail Website was re-designed and updated to include: contact information, upcoming events, history and progress of the trail, funding and partnerships, interactive membership, merchandise, concept trail map, Provincial Park and trail links. A counter, installed on July 31, 2003 will track visitors to the website. As of October 30, 2003 there have been 1195 hits (average of 400 hits per month) to the Park-To-Park Trail website. Contacts with municipalities and businesses will ensure that links to Park-To-Park Trail are included through other websites. As well, Park-To-Park will ensure that links are being maintained and updated through the Park-To-Park Trail website. Development is continuous on the Website with a Photo Gallery being recently added and plans to update the merchandise section. The upcoming events page is kept current regarding activities relevant to Park-To-Park Trail. To increase public awareness, the Website (www.parktoparktrail.com) is included on all



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correspondence, business cards, display board, Van and all public announcements. With continual updates, improvements and exposure of the Website, the target for 2004 is to increase the hits to an average of 500 per month.

MEDIA: Park-To-Park keeps the public informed about current trail development using a variety of media options. These include newspaper articles (North Star/Beacon, Almaguin News, Huntsville Forester/Weekender, Toronto Star, Muskoka Advance and The Muskokan), Trails and Tourism publications (Ontario Trails Council-Greenways Publication, Hike Ontario News, Muskoka Trails and Georgian Bay Country Destination Guide), press releases (at least two per year), interviews with Cogeco, New VR, MCTV, Ontario Parks tabloids (Killbear, Oastler Lake, The Massasauga and Arrowhead Park), seasonal publications (Fun in the Sun/Snow, Parry Sound Snowmobile Digest, advertising (public meetings and membership drive), community bulletin boards and radio (Moose FM 100.3 & 103.3 and 105.5 MORE FM). The Park-To-Park van displays the website, phone number and logo and is frequently seen at meetings, events and along the trail. The goal for 2004 is to continue with the above mentioned media options and to include 1 more publication in a Trails and Tourism publication. Georgian Bay Country has received money from the Tourism Recovery Plan to aid in the development of new attractions, promote off season activities and to build new partnerships. Georgian Bay Country will take out a full page of advertising with Park-To-Park Trail securing four advertising spots on the page, promoting biking trails. This would happen in the early spring/summer of 2004. An appropriate publication will need to be discussed.

TRAIL EVENTS: As the trail is in the development stage, trail events are an excellent resource to increase public awareness and to establish partnerships. Events for 2003 included:

- Guided Bird Watching Tour on Jessup's Lane (North of Huntsville) (attendance – 9)
- Photography Workshop (Parry Sound Rugged Fitness Trail) (attendance – 6)
- Bicycle Safety Rodeo (Killbear and Arrowhead Provincial Parks) (participants – approx.90 children plus parents)
- Trail Awareness Days (Parry Sound Mall) (approx 100-150 people)

Advertising for these events was done by posters, brochures, Pathways, Park-To-Park Website, Radio and Community TV, and word of mouth.

There is opportunity to host a variety of activities. Finding the resources, experienced people and money to continually offer events is the immediate need and challenge. Ideas for future events would be:

- Seasonal events (skiing, snowshoeing, fall hikes)
- Regular events – monthly or annually (guided tours, bird watching, photography, bicycle safety rodeos, walking for health)
- Cultural/Historical walks



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- Fundraising events – sponsored walk for the new West Parry Sound Health Centre
- Partnership events (bike events, triathlons, biking or hiking packages with resorts, partnering with clubs and other health related businesses)
- Challenge and Adventure Race Events (local and tourist market)

TRACKING: Developing methods of tracking will be beneficial for a variety of reasons. Funding organizations often require numbers for reports, Park-To-Park staff can determine areas of weakness and strength, and educated changes can be made to marketing strategies based on numbers. By creating a database, numbers will be tracked for email inquiries, website visitors, phone calls, mail inquiries, personal contacts, walk-ins and other (events, workshops, activities). Staff will keep daily logs of inquiries and submit monthly reports to be input into the database for tracking purposes (**SEE APPENDIX II**).

3.3 Expand Knowledge of Cultural Heritage and Natural Environment

“The Park-To-Park Trail route will traverse a region rich in natural and cultural heritage. Historical highlights include visible evidence of the logging and railway heritage of the area. Early settlement villages and colonization roads are also featured sites along the trail. Geographically, the trail will pass numerous lakes, rivers and streams, as well as extensive areas of forest, field and wetland habitat. A celebrated feature of the Park-To-Park Trail is the Precambrian geology of the Canadian Shield. The trail will cut laterally across the southern extent of the Shield exposing the glacially scarred granite bedrock.”

Interpretive signage will be designed highlighting points of interest, cultural heritage and the natural habitat. The Stephen R. Bronfman Foundation’s “Trans Canada Trail Discovery Program”, has an excellent opportunity for interpretive signage. Discovery panels will be provided to community trails organizations on an average of one per eight kms of registered trail (depending on length of trail and population). The panels will feature information about flora, fauna and geography.

An article will be featured in each of the quarterly newsletter “Pathways”, including information about specific points of interest. Historical and current pictures, with descriptions will be exhibited on the Static Expo Display. Future plans for guided tours will also be looked at to educate and create public awareness around cultural, historical and natural landmarks. Park-To-Park Trail brochures contain information highlighting cultural heritage and the natural environment as celebrated features of the Park-To-Park Trail. Information will be gathered by requests in Pathways, the Park-To-Park Trail Website and community members, asking for historical, cultural and natural environment information. Recruiting volunteers to research cultural and historical heritage at the library is an option that can be looked at in the future. Researching information in partnership with staff from the West Parry Sound Museum is another resource to explore.



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3.4 Endorse Benefits of Healthy/Active Lifestyles

Having such a diverse target market and target area, Park-To-Park Trail will need to create a variety of activities which include all four seasons. Examples of activities include:

- a) Bicycle Safety Rodeo for children. This would promote bicycle safety, physical activity, trail use and public awareness.
- b) Sponsored Trail Walk for High School Students. This would encourage physical activity in the form of walking, public awareness of the trail, community involvement and fundraising opportunities.
- c) Guided Hikes for adults and seniors (bird watching, flora and fauna, mushroom walk). This would promote healthy/active lifestyles, social opportunities and public awareness.
- d) Seasonal activities such as a native medicine walk, snowshoeing, bike-a-thons, walk-a-thons, and skiing would be implemented as resources become available to hold such events. This would be an excellent opportunity to develop partnerships, promote healthy/active living and create public awareness.

Articles featured in the quarterly newsletter "Pathways", will promote the benefits of healthy active living to all age levels and will feature activities that Park-To-Park Trail supports on the trail, such as walking, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. The Public Health Unit, local Doctors offices and establishments promoting healthy living will be approached to discuss the possibility of partnerships. Businesses that sponsor organized activities and events such as biking events and ATV events will be explored for possible partnership opportunities. It would be beneficial to host an activity or event in 2004 (such as the sponsored walk to raise funds for the West Parry Sound Health Centre), that is directly connected to promoting healthy/active living, measure the success and make plans for similar future events.

Physical activity is beneficial to all age groups. Articles could focus on activities for children, teens, adults and seniors. The benefits of active living certainly outweigh the risks of inactivity.

3.5 Foster Community Pride and Unity

Park-To-Park Trail encourages public participation through open houses (that are held when necessary) and information sessions (held when the opportunity arises). Community members would have the opportunity to provide input into trail development in their area and voice any concerns. Having a trail in the community gives a sense of unity as all are welcome to use the trail. By providing a recreational trail that provides health benefits, economic development and preservation of historical and cultural points of interest, communities will be proud to talk about the trail, and promote the trail to friends and family by word of mouth.



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3.6 Develop and Maintain Partnerships

The development of new partnerships is an important aspect in the growth of Park-To-Park Trail. As a not-for-profit organization, partnerships are a key element for success. Development of partnerships in the areas of financial support, construction of trail and public awareness will ensure continued support of the Park-To-Park project.

Park-To-Park Trail has established a good working relationship with many groups, clubs and organizations. These partnerships have allowed the sharing of resources, the lowering of costs by matching dollars and sharing marketing resources. Partnerships include:

10 Municipal Partners - All the municipalities provide funding for our operations program and will provide capital resources (money, equipment or materials) for our next phase of development. Park-To-Park Trail has 10 municipal representatives who sit on our Steering Committee.

Ontario Trillium Foundation – Trillium has granted P2P \$103,100 for wages over three years to deliver the NOHFC program of capital development.

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) - The capital component of our project is funded by NOHFC. They have earmarked \$249,814.00 over three years for infrastructure, signage and amenities.

Environmental Community Opportunity (ECO) Pilot Project – A partnership with the Parry Sound Ministry of Natural Resources and Parry Sound District Social Services. Although funding for this partnership has ended, we have maintained the project with District Social Services. We have secured a workshop, transportation of crew members, tools and equipment, and wages for an ECO Crew Leader who oversees trail construction and maintenance.

Ministry of Natural Resources - MNR has provided access to tools, equipment, ATV's, snowmobiles and trailers, in addition to mapping and other planning resources. An MNR liaison/advisor also sits on the Park-To-Park Trail Steering Committee.

Ontario Parks - With Killbear and Algonquin as anchor parks that will connect 7 parks in total (The Massasauga, Oastler Lake, Arrowhead, Oxtongue River - Ragged Falls and Big East River), Ontario Parks has provided lots of support to this project. This has included promotion in park tabloids, along with equipment and resources. We have an Ontario Park's representative sitting on our Steering Committee.



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Friends of Killbear Provincial Park - This group has helped promote Park-To-Park Trail while raising funds for their own inter-park trail, which will provide a vital link into Killbear Park to improve roadway safety concerns.

Huntsville Parks & Trails Committee - We have overlapping representation for both groups as we share sections of trail with the Trans Canada Trail. We will be matching capital dollars spent on these sections of trail to ensure funds are spent efficiently.

Ducks Unlimited Canada - We have been working with Ducks Unlimited to establish an interpretive site at the Partridge Bay Wetland in Carling Township. This partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited and Ontario Parks will provide a trail access point with parking and signage. Ducks Unlimited will also be assisting us to produce wetland biographies this summer and will provide support for our Wood Duck Nesting Box fundraising campaign.

Parry Sound District Snowmobile Club - Since Park-To-Park Trail uses some OFSC trails, we have been in contact with the District clubs to cost-share similar projects. Projects we have identified that can be partnered are bridging, resurfacing and land securement. Park-To-Park Trail is in regular contact with this group to promote cooperation, resources sharing and capital funding.

Muskoka District Snowmobile Club - We will be working with this group much the same way as we do with the Parry Sound District.

Georgian Bay Nordic Ski and Canoe Club – Future work will be done with the GBNSC to provide a link to Park-To-Park Trail in McDougall Township.

Parry Sound District ATV Club – We have a representative on our Board of Directors from this club and have worked on some events together.

Kearney ATV Club – To date, we have worked with the Almaguin Highlands' FedNor intern who has been hired to identify and promote trails for the Town of Kearney and to help establish a Kearney ATV Club. The ATV trails will be linked to the Park-To-Park Trail system.

Trans Canada Trail – Park-To-Park Trail manages 71kms of the TCT for the national body. The Park-To-Park Trail Project Coordinator sits on the Board for the Ontario division of the TCT.

Ontario Trails Council - Park-To-Park Trail works closely with the provincial body representing trails in Ontario.

Haliburton Highlands Trails and Tours Network - Partners for the purpose of sharing information, contacts and resources which will help us to learn from the experience of other groups.



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West Parry Sound Museum – Partnership with the Museum will aid in the research of historical and cultural points of interest of the trail.

Georgian Bay Land Trust – Formed a partnership to network with other environmental groups. Will work together on land in common interest to create trail attractions on property they hold title.

The above mentioned partners are involved on a continual basis. There are other significant partners that participate on a short term basis but are essential to the success and promotion of Park-To-Park Trail. These organizations for 2003 included:

Parry Sound Public Health Unit – Provided literature on healthy/active living for both the Trail Awareness Days and the Bicycle Safety Rodeos at Killbear and Arrowhead Provincial Parks.

Parry Sound and Huntsville Detachment OPP – Assisted with the Bicycle Safety Rodeo, providing information on Bicycle Helmet Safety and correct use of hand signals. They also assisted the children with the obstacle course.

State Farm Insurance - The sponsor for the Bicycle Safety Rodeo, State Farm Insurance provided an agent and necessary materials needed for the event. The event featured bicycle safety information, an obstacle course, inspection station and personalized bike licences for participating children.