Indicator 1: Wet and Muddy Areas

Wet and muddy areas result in soil compaction and trail widening. They can also reduce user enjoyment, result in unsafe conditions, and make the trail unusable or undesirable for some user groups (e.g., inexperienced hikers or riders, older citizens, and families with young children). Conditions of wet areas tend to deteriorate over time and, if not corrected, can require costly repairs.

Look for:

- Wet and muddy trail segments >5 feet in length (5 feet = approximately 2 large steps)
- Wet and muddy areas are typically located on flat sections of trail
- The degree of wetness and muddiness can vary depending on the season of the year and with different weather conditions. During dry conditions look for evidence of wet and muddy conditions, including absence of vegetation, trail width, and embedded footprints or tire tracks

Moderate	Severe
New or existing footprints or tracks >2 inches but not <6 inches in depth	New or existing footprints or tracks >6 inches in depth

Indicator 2: Erosion

Soil erosion on trails can degrade water quality, impede safe travel along trails, and make the trail unusable or undesirable for some user groups (e.g., inexperienced hikers or riders, older citizens, and families with young children).

Look for:

- **Eroded trails segments >5 feet in length (5 feet = approximately 2 large steps)**
- **Soil erosion typically occurs on steep sections of trail where flowing water mobilizes soil particles**
- **Evidence of soil erosion includes exposed tree roots and rocks, ruts and evidence of concentrated water flow during wet weather, and trail surfaces that are entrenched or lower than the level of surrounding ground**

Moderate	Severe
Ruts or gullies between 2-6 inches deep anywhere within eroded trail segment **OR** Differences between trail and surrounding ground between 2-6 inches deep anywhere within eroded trail segment	Ruts or gullies >6 inches deep anywhere within eroded trail segment **OR** Differences between trail and surrounding ground >6 inches deep anywhere within eroded trail segment

Indicator 3: Water Quality

Stream crossings (bridges, fords, culverts) can result in inputs of soil, mud, sand, silt, and gravel to stream channels. These inputs are a major concern because the impacts to habitat and biota can be serious and extend for 100's of yards downstream of the trail. Recreational users find degradation of water quality to be undesirable and crossings in poor condition are often unsafe and create impassible barriers along the trail.

Look for:

- Stream crossings that are at least 3 feet wide (can not be easily jumped over)
- Decreased water clarity or sediment accumulation downstream of the crossing compared to upstream
- Materials from the trail surface (soil, mud, gravel, wood chips, etc.) or crossing structure entering a stream channel
- Disturbance of plants or soil structure (foot prints, ruts, soil slumping) on stream banks

Moderate	Severe
Accumulation of sediment downstream of crossing is approximately 2- 6 cups greater than upstream **OR** Erosion channels or embedded footprints or tire tracks on stream banks or within the stream channel that are 2-6 inches deep	Accumulation of sediment downstream of crossing is approximately 6+cups greater than upstream **OR** Erosion channels or embedded footprints or tire tracks on stream banks or within the stream channel that are 6+ inches deep

Indicator 4: Trail Safety

Trail safety is a priority of trail managers, land owners, and recreational users. Early detection and rapid response to unsafe conditions can prevent accidents. Evaluate safety risks based on the primary users of the trail (i.e., advanced ATV riders or backpackers, families with young children, older citizens, individuals with limited mobility).

Look for:

- **Structures (bridges, steps, ladders, etc.) that are in disrepair and may result in harm to users**
- **Trail conditions, including steep slopes or areas with slippery or loose substrates without adequate traction, that are likely to cause harm to users**
- **Road or trail intersection, merging trails, or shared trail conditions that may be dangerous to users**

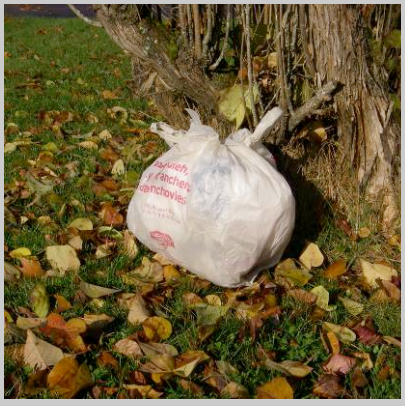
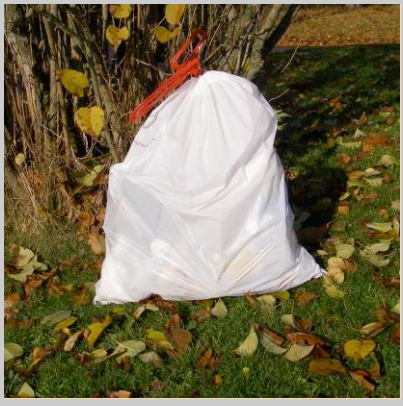
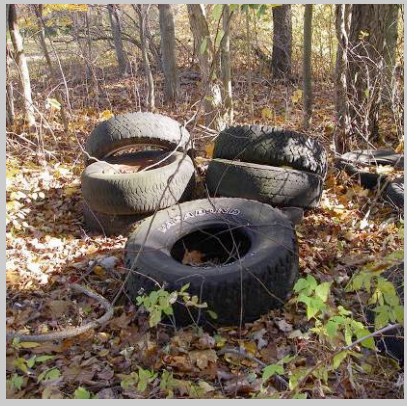
Moderate	Severe
Conditions that are likely to cause injury or harm to users now or in the near future (<12 months)	Conditions that are very likely to cause harm to users now or in the near future (<12 months)
	

Indicator 5: Trash and Litter

The presence of trash and litter along recreation trails has significant implications for user enjoyment of the trails and for maintaining positive relationships with landowners and easement holders. Landowners (public and private) and easement holders are very sensitive to trash and dumping on their property. Failure to respond to concerns about trash may jeopardize future recreational access to private lands.

Look for:

- Litter, including bottles, cans, candy wrappers, and paper products, as well as larger trash items like computer equipment, tires, and mattresses
- Accumulations of trash near trail heads, picnic or look-out spots, and where trails cross roads
- Other locations where trash detracts from the overall experience of the trail

Low	Moderate	Severe
The amount of trash along the trail segment would fit in a disposable plastic grocery bag	The amount of trash along the trail segment exceeds what would fit in a disposable plastic grocery bag but could be cleaned up using a single tall kitchen size trash bag (13 gallons)	The amount of trash along the trail segment would exceed a single tall kitchen size trash bag (13 gallons)
		

Recreation Trail Stewardship Scorecard: Sample Datasheet

Trail Name	Lookout Trail (Trail head to Wire Bridge Rd)	Form Completed By:	EW and TAR
Property Owner	Town of Mt. Pleasant	Organization:	Friends of Mt. Pleasant
Trail Length	approx. 3 miles	Date Completed:	9/7/2009

Indicator	Wet and Muddy		Soil Erosion		Water Quality		Trail Safety		Trash
	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Severe	(Circle One)
Tally of Observations	I	0	I	II	I	II	I	1	Low (0 pts.) Moderate (1 pt.) Severe (10 pts.)
Locations of Observation (optional)	• Mile 1/2		• Mile 0.8	• Mile 1.5 • Mile 2	• 1st Twin Brook Xing (Mile 2)	• Bear Creek Xing (Mile 1) • 2nd Twin Brook xing (Mile 2.5)	• Mile 1.5	• Mile 2	• Soda bottles and wrappers near lookout (Mile 1) • Mattress dumped Near Wire Bridge Rd. (Mile 2)
Trail Totals	1	0	1	2	1	2	1	1	Severe
Multiplier	1	10	1	10	1	10	1	10	--
Total*Multiplier	1	0	1	20	1	20	1	10	10

Sum	Trail length (miles) x 2 (constant)	Sum ÷ (Trail Length x 2)	Final Score
1 + 0 + 1 + 20 + 1 + 20 + 1 + 10 + 10 = 64	3 miles x 2 = 6	64 ÷ 6 = 10.6	10.6 = 11

Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences Datasheet available at: www.manometmaine.org

Final Score	% of trails with lower scores (in better condition)	% of trails with higher scores (in worse condition)
1	6	94
5	12	88
10	30	70
20	50	50
30	67	33
40	72	28
50	78	22
60	83	17
70	90	10
80	94	6
90	98	2
100	100	0

The final score of 11 means that approximately 30% of trails sampled in Maine and northern New Hampshire had lower scores and were in better condition than the Lookout Trail. About 70% of these trails had higher scores and were in worse condition than the Lookout Trail.

Recommended Citation: Wilkerson, E. and A.A. Whitman. 2009. Recreation Trail Stewardship Scorecard: User Guide, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Brunswick, Maine