

RTA - Securing our Trail: Basis for scoring current trail quality

March 2018

Our Goal: To “score” the quality of the Rideau trail as it is today, using a defined scoring system. This will be the basis for improving the trail experience.

Scoring Basis: For scoring purposes the Rideau Trail has been broken down into a series of sections, based upon the already-defined and numbered waypoints. As you score each section, please consider whether a given section contains such differing attributes that it needs to be broken down further into two or three sub-sections. If this is the case, simply add additional line(s) within the given section, and score each sub-section.

Scoring Level: There are four (4) levels of score which need to be given for each of the six criteria listed below, as follows:

1. **Lowest score:** Does not meet definition of this particular criterion in any way
2. **Not ideal:** Does not to any degree meet this criterion
3. **Is acceptable:** Generally meets this criterion
4. **Is ideal:** Completely (most exactly) reflects this criterion

Scoring Criteria: The six (6) criteria for scoring each section are as follows:

- **Permanent Access:** does this section of trail run on: a publically owned property such as Conservation Area, Parks Canada land, Ontario Provincial Park, the K&P or Cataraqui Trails, City recreational trail or bicycle path, major or minor road. If so, then give a 3 or 4 score (regardless of other issues such as safety).
- **Scenery/natural beauty:** does this section of trail pass through an area of attractive scenery or natural beauty. This can include many varied sceneries, not just the rugged Canadian Shield country.
- **Historical/Architectural/Cultural:** does this section of trail run through areas – or past individual sites - of historical, architectural or cultural interest? Score the section accordingly.
- **Safety:** busy roads are considered to be the most hazardous parts of the trail and often the most difficult to remedy/avoid in every case. Lesser-traveled roads can also hazardous, often having sharp curves or blind hills where drivers have little time to react to hikers on the road. Sections of trail where cyclists, quad bikes or snowmobiles are permitted are also

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considered a safety risk to hikers. A safety score can also be impacted by issues such as concentrations of wild parsnip, steep hills, mica mines beside trail, and so on. Higher score means better safety.

- **Ecological/Geological:** Score the section based on the amount/quality of ecological and geological features on that section: variety of flora and fauna, existence of an area where an attempt is being made to provide environmental protection, interesting geological features beside the trail.
- **Maintainability:** Score this based upon the amount of effort and cost needed to maintain the particular section of trail, and also the extent to which the section can be used year round. A higher score means less effort to maintain and more accessibility all year.

Scoring Process: Don't get bogged down with this. Go with your gut feel and knowledge of the route. Only break down the sections further if you just cannot give it a single score. Aim to do the exercise within about one hour, and then do a final run through to see if it makes sense as a whole. Please read the scoring criteria carefully first, so we can have a consistent approach to the scoring process, especially what constitutes low versus high score.