

CHAPTER 6

Core Trail Maintenance

Maintenance of the trails systems is essential for safe and enjoyable use. And if not maintained properly over the long term, the infrastructure of the trail system may be become a wasted investment of invaluable financial and natural resources.



Spring Clean-up on the Vail Pass Trail

The Core Trail Maintenance Program envisioned by this plan is comprised of two basic approaches:

1. A short term maintenance program for the core trail system
2. A long term maintenance program for the core trail system after it has attained some connectivity

For the purposes of this plan and it's described system, trails other than the Core Trail and select spur trails, shall be the responsibility of the entity that constructed, currently maintains or otherwise controls that route.

It is not the intent of this planning document to recommend a method of maintenance for every paved or unpaved, urban or backcountry trail or neighborhood sidewalk in incorporated and unincorporated Eagle County. The program recommended below applies to the core trail and select spurs only.

Recommended Core Trail Maintenance Program

Short Term: up to 5 years:

Each jurisdiction that is part of cooperative effort to construct the core trail system will be responsible for the maintenance of the portion of the core trail located within their boundaries.

Long Term: 5 years +

Cooperatively develop a single-entity maintenance program to serve the need for coordinated multi-jurisdictional trail maintenance. Work towards combining equipment needs through the different jurisdictions and hire the necessary staff to handle associated maintenance tasks.

Recommended Maintenance Schedule:

- Sweep trail once a month, starting in April, but sweep sections that are heavily impacted by debris from adjacent road, hillsides, etc. every two weeks as needed.
- Inspect trail surface, shoulders and structures such as bridges, walls, sign posts, etc. periodically using a checklist, every two weeks is suggested. A meticulous inspection should take place in the spring after the snow has fully melted and the path has been swept for the first time.

- Perform weed and vegetation control including mowing up to 2 feet on each side of the trail as needed.
- Repair and retrofit trail surface cracks or holes, shoulder erosion, structure damage, etc. or arrange for repair as needed.
- Clean culverts as needed.
- Install or replace signs and trail furniture as needed.
- Empty trash containers as needed.
- Remove trash from adjacent ground as needed.
- Repaint trail or road crosswalk striping as needed.
- Plowing is left up to the discretion of the individual jurisdiction.
- Seal coating is left up to discretion of the individual jurisdiction but is encouraged every 5 years minimum.

Other Considerations:

1. The Eagle County Regional Transportation Authority is currently committed to an annual per mile contribution to individual town and county jurisdictions to maintain their sections of core trail, subject to approval by the Authority Board. Authority partners may also request maintenance contributions as necessary for periodic overlays or reconstruction.
2. The Authority will coordinate annual forums with maintenance personnel to review the core trail maintenance program, issues and funding. The towns and county will collectively determine when it is financially feasible to create an independent maintenance entity to care for the entirety of the core trail system.
3. Annual inspections of the trail should be performed by each jurisdiction to determine potential internal budget issues and Authority trail maintenance funding requests for the following year.
4. Non-public sections of the core trail should be converted to public sections through grant of easement to the underlying jurisdiction to eliminate issues of inconsistent or inadequate maintenance and potential loss of access. Trails should be brought into conformance to safety standards prior to acceptance. Endowment for maintenance from the grantor should be sought to defray the additional costs of maintenance for the responsible jurisdiction.
5. Jurisdictions should avoid responsibility for the maintenance of trail easements until a trail has been constructed upon them. Until that time, easement maintenance (weeds, drainage, etc.) if necessary, should be the responsibility of the easement grantor unless otherwise specified by the easement document.

6. In the case of widened shoulder or specially designated bike lanes on Town, County, State or Federal roadways, maintenance should include increased attention to debris clearing, pavement repair of edges and potholes, and scheduling of chip seals.
7. Volunteer maintenance shall be encouraged wherever appropriate. Volunteer efforts may be limited to clean-up of trash, sign and trail accessory placement or vegetation control, but certain minor construction or drainage projects could be undertaken by volunteers at the discretion of the pertinent jurisdiction.
8. Maintenance responsibility should be determined as part of the construction planning process and publicly documented.