

# CRHA Trail Maintenance Guidelines

September, 2021

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## Guiding Principles and Purpose of Document

**Guiding Principles:** Church Ranches Homeowners Association (CRHA) common lands are maintained in such a way as to preserve the natural setting of the environment. The natural grasses, wild flowers and trees are left undisturbed and allowed to grow naturally as they always have. Wildlife is respected and provided with a safe and undisturbed habitat. Minor clearing is made for gravel pathways to minimize their environmental impact and preserve the natural setting.

**Purpose of document:** The purpose is to define the standards and processes required to ensure Church Ranches Homeowners Association's trail network is sustainable and fit for residential use purposes as described by Church Ranches Homeowners Association's Rules and Regulations. This document is to be used as a reference guide whenever trail maintenance is undertaken.

## General Usage

The CRHA trails are provided for the use and enjoyment of Church Ranches residents and their guests. Maintenance of the trails is necessary to preserve the trails for community enjoyment as well as to retain associated property values.

## Resident Usage

Trails must be suitable for all age groups and abilities. The trails must be fit for multipurpose uses: supporting activities such as walking, jogging, biking, child strollers, mobility restricted access, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Residents are to use the trails responsibly.

Wildlife and plant life are to be left undisturbed as much as possible. For further guidance on expectations for resident trail usage, please refer to paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Church Ranches Homeowners Association's Rules and Regulations for the Use of the Common Lands and Amenities of the Church Ranches Subdivision.

## Maintenance Usage

General use of maintenance vehicles is to be limited as much as possible to preserve the trail surface. During winter months or when trails are wet or soft, use of maintenance vehicles should be minimized. When possible, the surrounding county roads are to be used to access infrastructure, conduct general maintenance, and monitor lakes and the common lands. Maintenance vehicle operators are to use slow speeds for safety purposes and to reduce pathway erosion.

## Trail Standards

CRHA trails are categorized as "Mixed Use", semi-developed trails. The trail is 2 - 3 metres wide, the cleared width 3 - 4 metres, with a clearance height of 3.5 metres.

As per trail standards, in the future new signage at the trail heads could indicate allowed uses. Any special notices (eg, trail closure, wildlife cautions, hazards, trespasser warnings etc.) will be posted on temporary signage.

Marker stones provide a visual guide to appropriate trail usage, protect trail edges from being eroded and guide the user through the trails. Marker stones are placed at trail heads, trail junctions and trail corners to discourage the corners being cut, one side of every marker stone abuts the edge of the trail, without impeding regular park maintenance vehicles.

Dog Waste Bins are placed in convenient locations to promote use and reduce waste left in common areas. Most are located near trailheads allowing access for waste removal via the surrounding roads. Garbage bins are not provided: residents and guests are required to take their garbage home.

## Trail Resurfacing

Semi-developed trails have a granular surface such as crushed gravel, shale or wood chips. Surface material must ensure that the trail has a stable surface that does not shift or slide as trail users pass by. Mechanically compacted crusher fines should be used to provide the required trail surface, a binding agent is required to stabilize the material.

Suitable 'Trail Mix' resurfacing material is available from Lafarge Spyhill location (sales desk 403-292-1644, contact Geoff Clarke), made to the City of Calgary specification of 16mm minus aggregate/gravel and clay binder. Lafarge typically has 1000-2000 tonnes on hand, 2021 cost including delivery: tandem truck approx \$225 per 25-28 tonnes truck.

An appropriately sized machine to spread new material should be used to ensure the trail width does not exceed 2 - 3 m. Stockpiles of new material are not to be placed on common land vegetation; resurfacing vehicles must stay on the trail tread.

## Trail Maintenance

Grass cutting trail edges is done between June and September to a width of approximately 0.5m to discourage the encroachment of vegetation. Minimizing the buffer zone between trail and the vegetation allows the user to feel closer to the natural environment.

Pruning of trees and shrubs allowing for passage will be undertaken so that the trail appears natural. Removal of living trees or saplings requires board approval. Any removal of trees or saplings is at ground level for visual and safety reasons.

Marker stones occasionally erode and need replacing with natural rock of a similar size.

Steep slopes should be checked for erosion after heavy rainfall. Slip hazard material must be removed and washouts repaired using a stockpile of trail material kept on hand.

Trail users are invited to report issues and concerns to the Chairperson of the Parks Committee through the general CRHA email [info@churchranches.ca](mailto:info@churchranches.ca) .

## Weed Control

Noxious weeds on common lands as listed on Rocky Views website <https://www.rockyview.ca/problem-weeds> and at the provincial website <https://www.alberta.ca/provincially-regulated-weeds.aspx> are controlled with appropriate selective herbicides depending on the weed type. The herbicide is chosen in consultation with a professional and for the least impact on surrounding vegetation.

Weeds appearing on the main trail tread are removed with sparing use of herbicides (spot spraying.) Non-prohibited or non-noxious weeds on the sides of the trails are tolerated to preserve the natural appearance of the trail unless they are encroaching. If encroaching, a selective turf herbicide is used. The CRHA uses chemicals that are approved by Health Canada, are pet and human friendly, and dry within 15 minutes. As the chemicals used are not a danger to residents or their pets and as signage is not legally required and contributes to litter, the HOA will not provide notification of weed control activity.


## Maintenance Vehicle Specifications

CRHA maintenance vehicles are to be purchased with a view to the type, size and weight necessary to successfully accomplish the regular tasks on the common lands and the lakes. Use of lighter, smaller maintenance vehicles is optimal to minimize erosion of the trails. Similar

considerations apply to the use of any subcontractor's vehicles or machinery, with the understanding that they will be the smallest and lightest option appropriate to the task and available to the subcontractor.

CRHA Board Approval

Voted on and approved at September 13, 2021 Board Meeting

  
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Claudine Hanson - President CRHA

September 20, 2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
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Laurie Brazzoni - VP, Chair of Parks Committee

September 20, 2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Reference Documents:**

*Church Ranches Developer's Information Booklet, Spring 1999*  
<https://churchranches.ca/resources/Documents/Bylaws.%20RCs.%20Rules%20etc/1999%20CRHA%20Information%20Booklet.PDF>

*Alberta Recreational Corridor and Trails Classification System, Government of Alberta, May 2009*  
<http://www.albertatrailnet.com/downloads/Rec%20Corridors%20Trail%20Classification%20Manual.pdf>

*Trail Development Guidelines for Alberta's Public Lands, Alberta Environment and Parks, Government of Alberta, September 2019*  
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/b1cae0e7-4b70-4c7b-8575-f89ada15342d/resource/9cc04dc8-ffe5-4c04-aed4-ff43cee2cb56/download/aep-trail-development-guidelines-2019.pdf>

*Ontario's Best Trails - Guidelines and Best Practices for the Design, Construction and Maintenance of Sustainable Trails for all Ontarians, Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative, 2006*  
[https://www.recpro.org/assets/Library/Trails/ontario\\_guidelines\\_bmp\\_design\\_construction\\_maintenance\\_sustainable\\_trails.pdf](https://www.recpro.org/assets/Library/Trails/ontario_guidelines_bmp_design_construction_maintenance_sustainable_trails.pdf)

*Trails Management Manual, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, May 2018:*  
[https://www.maricopacountyparks.net/assets/1/6/2018\\_Trails\\_Management\\_Training\\_Manual\\_Update.pdf](https://www.maricopacountyparks.net/assets/1/6/2018_Trails_Management_Training_Manual_Update.pdf)

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