

Swedetown Trails Club Trails Master Plan

Introduction to the Trails Master Plan

Since the 1960s a club, presently called the Swedetown Trails Club (STC), has been dedicated to providing the best trail experiences possible in the Swedetown region of Calumet/Laurium, Michigan. STC members work to connect people to trails, nature, and each other through recreation.

Club Charter: The purpose of this corporation is to promote year-round non-motorized sports by supporting trail use, development, maintenance and related sports education at Swedetown Recreational Area, Calumet, Michigan.

The STC and Calumet Township work together to provide responsible, sustainable, and positive recreation amenities for all trail users.

This document is a guide to providing high quality trails that energize visitors and creating life-long users and advocates of the trail system.

The following is a list of definitions adopted by the Swedetown Trails Club:

Master Plan: a plan giving overall guidance. A list of guiding principles by which to make decisions.

Trails Master Plan: A Master Plan developed by the STC trails committee outlining guiding principles for the planning, development and maintenance of non-motorized trails overseen by the STC.

5-Year Plan: A plan for development specifying goals to be reached within a period of five years. The 5-Year plan includes identification of specific goals, objectives, and actions. It may also identify funding resources for specific goals and identify persons responsible for overseeing the completion of the objectives and actions.

Guiding Principles: The following principles are used by the STC to guide decision making regarding the validity and priority of proposed projects.

1. The STC values non-motorized trails that encourage 4-season use by a diverse set of people with varying abilities and fitness levels. As such, the STC values a trail system with a mixture of trails, including easy, intermediate, and advanced levels of difficulty.
2. The STC values trails for a variety of non-motorized users, including classic and skate skiing, summer and snow biking, walking, snowshoeing, running, dog-walking, and hiking.

3. The STC values trails that provide the feeling of being “out there” or far away from other trails, buildings, roads, etc. We value scenery and open spaces.
4. The STC values designing and constructing high-quality trails with sustainability first and foremost in mind to limit environmental impact and future maintenance and to ensure long-term cost effectiveness.
5. The STC values trails that are safe given a user’s ability level relative to the trail difficulty designation. The STC seeks to balance safety with fun, excitement, interest, and challenge, with considerations given to avoiding collisions.
6. The STC values sustainable trails that are properly drained, minimally side sloped, smoothly tread (or appropriately tread) and easy to mow, brush and/or groom. As a part of sustainability, the STC values prioritizing maintenance, repair and improvements to existing trails over development of new trails. The STC values ski trails that are rock free, grass covered and easy to mow and brush.
7. The STC encourages collaboration with all user groups, volunteers, stakeholders, government, and non-government organizations.
8. The STC’s Trails Master Plan and 5-Year Plan are living documents and provide a level of flexibility that allows the club to entertain attractive new unforeseen projects and incorporate them into the 5-Year Plan at any time given board approval.
9. The STC supports the design, development, and maintenance of trail systems that optimize the quality of the trails by utilizing “best practices” as outlined by FIS, Cross-Country Ski Area Association, IMBA and BLM. This includes easy to understand and navigate trail layouts with both loop trails and linear trails. One way traffic is preferred for ski trails to prevent potential collisions.
10. The STC supports trail development to enable special events to occur. This may include short wide sections for Aid Stations, development of start/finish/exchange areas, and extra wide trails for the beginning or ending portions of an event. Trail alteration for events must balance the benefits of events (social, revenue, increased trail use throughout the year) with the environmental and aesthetic impacts of the trail changes.
11. The STC supports the connectivity of communities via non-motorized travel.
12. The STC encourages community involvement in the creation and maintenance of trails.
13. The STC encourages fiscal responsibility by using cost effective means of trail development and maintenance and by purchasing new or used quality equipment.

14. The STC values volunteerism and volunteers.
15. The STC values trails that have a primary use and can support a secondary use as long as it does not negatively impact the primary use of the trail. (Example: bike trails that are snowshoe trails)
16. The STC values consistency in trail difficulty ratings relative to national and international standards.
17. The STC values consistency in trail maintenance.
18. The STC values consistency in trail challenges within each trail.
19. The STC values signage that is consistent, clear, not overused, and compatible for both summer and winter uses.