

## **OTC Policy Statement Land Use:**

Whereas the OTC is a charity promoting the development, access and use of recreational trails it finds it necessary to refine its position on the use of land for recreational purposes.

### **Distinctions**

**There is public and private land.** Some of the public land is controlled by the authority of regional governments and municipalities. This is sometimes transferred to public access through parks or conservation authority. Other public land is controlled by the Ministry of Natural Resources, usually crown lands and forests. Most crown land is in northern Ontario.

**There are a variety of users of these lands.** They may be motorized or non-motorized. They may have machines or animals or children. They may be operating a form of recreational craft, such as a bike or a canoe. There is an interaction between users on the various types of land.

**There may be a fee for use.** Usually there is a fee attached to the use of land. Usually this is in the form of a permit attached to the machine if the person is a motorized user. In the case of non-motorized, an event fee for participation or staging of an event using land. In addition municipal or regional authorities, and most certainly **Ontario Parks**, parks charge fees for admission and/or parking.

### **Problems:**

**There is limited access.** Due to a variety of pressures there is less land in southern Ontario for recreational purposes. These are environmental, population, conservation, dedicated or other reasons.

Population encroachment, and related developments limits the availability of land for recreational use. Environmental concerns remove protected areas from the potential land base. Conservation to protect watershed and river areas limits other use. Dedicated land for future development or other zoning removes additional acreage for recreational use.

In addition the ability of private and public landowners to obtain and maintain necessary insurance coverage in order to permit public use, through agreement or otherwise is limiting access to recreational trail users.

## **Resolutions –**

**In order to ensure the broadest public interest be attained in the availability of lands for recreational use, the OTC proposes:**

- 1) That public planners include in public land use plans, corridors for recreational trails.
- 2) That users expect and respect land use, and shared use, by other trail users.
- 3) That private property rights be respected at all times.
- 4) That event planners ensure that their permits, obligations and use guidelines for events are properly processed and followed by all participants.
- 5) That provincial lands be set aside for recreational use.
- 6) That a provincial insurance for recreational trials be developed and implemented.
- 7) That municipalities, departments of the environment and crown land stewards work with recreational trial users to ensure sustainability of land resources for recreational trail users.
- 8) That trail users return the land after events to the condition of the land prior to the event.
- 9) That environmental and conservationist organizations work with OTC and its members to strike a balance between competing demands on land.
- 10) That province wide safety and policing issues be addressed so that there is a public and private accountability regarding trail use.