

Destination Trails



Market Readiness Guidelines





What is a Destination Trail?

Destination trails are set in locations that reflect the province's most distinguishing and memorable viewsapes, natural features, culture, and heritage. Hiking and pleasure walking in and around communities are the top two outdoor experiences travellers participate in while vacationing in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

Travellers are attracted to specific areas of the province based on the locations of high-quality hiking and walking trails. As new and improved trails are created, it is important to strive to exceed traveller expectations and to cluster nearby experiences to enhance the overall appeal of the destination trail.



Market Readiness Guidelines

Provincial Brand & Tourism Development

Trails in NL nurture a traveller's mind, body, and soul. Here, they'll discover 29,000 kilometres of pristine coastline, dotted with beaches, sea stacks, and hundreds of hiking and walking trails.

Destination trails have a theme consistent with the attributes of the province and the province's brand pillars of people, culture and natural environment.

- Example: coastal trails that provide unique panoramic ocean views and the possibility of viewing whales, icebergs, and seabirds.

Cluster of Attractions & Services

Destination trails are usually close to other attractions, offering complementary experiences and activities like food, accommodations, and other visitor services.

A cluster demonstrates a regional approach by collaborating with local businesses, non-profits and government-operated sites, municipalities, and communities.

Management

Destination trails are Tourism Assurance Plan (TAP) approved and adhere to General Market Readiness Guidelines.

The trail should be owned, monitored, and maintained by a recognized entity.

Operators should have a long-term plan for the management, development, and maintenance of the trail.

All regulatory processes and compliances are required to be in place (see Appendix A).

Operators should have a marketing plan (i.e., target markets, pricing strategy, communications tactics, budget) that includes marketing materials such as a website, social media presence, rack cards, and brochures.

Key elements for success include:

- Engagement with local communities, businesses, and other regional / provincial tourism networks.
- An ongoing commitment to frontline training in customer service and site interpretation.
- Effective collection and utilization of visitor data.



Designed for the Visitor Journey

Every visitor journey in Newfoundland and Labrador is different, from their entry and exit points, to the mode of transportation they use, the services they require, and the attractions and activities they experience along the way.

All partners along the visitor's journey - transportation, visitor services, food, accommodations, and things to do - can enhance tourism experiences by meeting market-readiness guidelines.

Experiences should be designed with the visitor in mind from the planning/booking stage through to their arrival, experience and departure.

Planning / Booking

Trail operators should offer clear and comprehensive information and planning tools to visitors.

Responsive website and online content should be well-designed and focused on the needs of visitors.

There is a demonstrated commitment to promoting other attractions and services in the region.

The following information should be available:

- Trail descriptions.
- Directions to trailheads.
- Information about trail conditions and safety.
- Accessibility levels (i.e., paved, rocky terrain, loose gravel, packed soil).
- Maps, easy-to-understand route options.
- Suggested itineraries.
- Links to food experiences, accommodations, attractions, and other services on trail or nearby.
- Accurate contact information.
- Business listings for destination trails should be accurate and up-to-date in the Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism Operator Portal (NLTOP).



Sense of Arrival

When travellers arrive, there should be clear and concise directional signage to the trailhead, including:

- Level of accessibility.
- Length and duration of trail.
- Estimated travel time.
- Level of difficulty.
- Seasonal information.
- User rules and guidelines.
- Safety and emergency information.

Experience on the Trail

Operators of Destination Trails should:

Strive for quality experiences that interpret and celebrate the rich stories of the area.

Offer visitor-focused experiences that are informative, and actively engage with other events, services, and attractions.

Provide adequate informational and directional signage along the trail for a safe and positive experience:

- Trail markers and signage to inform users of changes in routes and possible hazards.
- Distance markers.

Ensure trails are in good condition with a hard, stable surface and ideally dry and free of debris.

When visiting a destination trail, travellers should encounter:

- Adequate, convenient, site-based parking.
- Branded on-site signage and clean washrooms.
- Ecologically sensitive trail construction and maintenance.
- Washrooms, handrails, bridges, steps, etc. are kept in good repair.

Departure

Encourage repeat visits, traveller feedback (on sites such as TripAdvisor), and sharing of stories, photos, and videos through social media channels with: **#ExploreNL**

Have Questions?

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Appendix A

Trail Development Checklist for Project Sponsors

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation recognizes the valuable contribution of trails to the tourism experience. In consultation with other departments and agencies, this checklist has been developed to inform trail stakeholders of regulations and requirements related to trail activities in NL.

Crown Land

Under the Lands Act, all trails that use Crown land require a Licence to Occupy (LTO). This includes trails within a municipality. Contact information for your Regional Lands office can be found here: http://www.flr.gov.nl.ca/department/contact_lands.html

Provincial Archaeology Office

Under the Historic Resources Act, any plans for new trails or upgrades to existing trails that haven't had prior approval from the Provincial Archaeology Office should be referred to that office for review. As part of the LTO application, trails will also be reviewed by the Provincial Archaeology Office.

<https://www.tcii.gov.nl.ca/pao/index.html>

Signage Policy

Fingerboard signs permitted through the Department of Transportation and Works can provide direction to trailheads (i.e., parking areas). These signs are issued through an annual fee permit system and include the manufacturing, installation, and maintenance.

Other permitted signs along provincial highways include offsite promotional signage, issued through a permit system by Service NL.

Applications for both fingerboards and offsite promotional signs are available at: <http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/licenses/highway/index.html>

Liability

The organization or committee is liable for issues related to any trails constructed or enhanced. It is recommended that trail owners / managers assess trails and their responsibility to the public before promoting their trail(s).

Trail Standards

Trail construction standards have not been adopted by the province, but existing provincial standards should be adhered to (e.g., rise and run of steps). It is recommended that groups engage professional trail designers, builders, and project managers. The technical skills obtained by trail workers will contribute to a quality trail product and maintenance (a well-designed and built trail will require less maintenance).

Environmental Assessments

Under the Environmental Protection Act, trails longer than 10 kilometres have to be registered. Registration may also be required for trails near sensitive ecological areas or, as per Section 28 of the Regulations, for trails that will occur within 200 metres of a scheduled salmon river. http://www.mae.gov.nl.ca/env_assessment/

Water Permit

Under the Water Resources Act, a permit is required when construction is within 15 metres of a body of water (including wetland). A permit will also be required for any work within a Protected Water Supply Area. <http://www.mae.gov.nl.ca/waterres/permits/>