

HIKE ONTARIO

COMPASS 2015

STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

Final

September 25, 2010

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE

This document summarizes the results of the strategic planning activity carried out by the Hike Ontario Board of Directors from July 2009 to September 2010.

The document presents the strategic goals and objectives that will guide the organization from 2010 to 2015.

1.2. PLANNING PROCESS

The Compass 2015 planning process was set in motion at the May 30, 2009 Board meeting.

The following process was used to develop the Compass 2015 strategic plan:

- Reviewed and updated the Hike Ontario Vision Statement
- Conducted a SWOT¹ analysis
- Conducted a stakeholder analysis which examined the relationship between Hike Ontario's current products and services and the stakeholder groups which benefit from these initiatives
- Identified and prioritized the strategic issues that should drive the Compass 2015 strategic plan
- Obtained feedback from the member hiking clubs and associations
- Developed strategies and potential action plans for addressing the strategic issues
- Defined strategic objectives
- Developed a roadmap for achieving the strategic objectives over the 2010-2015 planning timeframe.

¹ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

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1.3. MILESTONES

The Compass 2015 planning activities were carried out in the following sequence:

Milestone	Date
Compass 2015 planning process launched	May 30, 2009
First meeting of Strategic Planning Committee	July 4, 2009
SWOT Analysis completed	September 3, 2009
Hike Ontario Vision adopted and strategic themes prioritized	September 26, 2009
First review of draft strategies	January 23, 2010
Second review of draft strategies and decision to develop a roadmap	May 15, 2010
Development of draft roadmap	August 31, 2010
Review and adoption of Compass 2015 strategic plan report	September 25, 2010

1.4. STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The following persons participated in the creation of the Compass 2015 strategic plan as members of the Hike Strategic Planning Committee:

- Tom Friesen
- John Fortier
- Ron Hunt (Facilitator)
- Terri LeRoux
- Deanna Rando
- Raymond Soucy
- Bill Wilson
- Brendan Zamojc.

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2. VISION

This Chapter describes process that was used to review, update and approve the Hike Ontario Vision statement.

2.1. CONCEPT OF “VISION”

The purpose of a Vision statement is to provide the organization and its stakeholders with a conception of where Hike Ontario is going and what future success will look like².

The organization’s vision is a key ingredient that should be settled before starting to develop the strategic objectives. Vision drives strategy

2.2. COMPASS 2010 VISION STATEMENT

The Hike Ontario Vision statement in the Compass 2010 strategic plan was:

“Hike Ontario seeks to develop and maintain its unique position as the number one source of province-wide information and resources about hiking, walking, and pedestrian trail development and management in Ontario.

It was agreed at the May 30, 2009 Board meeting that the Hike Ontario Vision should be revisited.

The Board’s feedback on the Compass 2010 Vision statement at that time was:

- The Vision statement should make reference to the stakeholders that Hike Ontario serves.

2.3. REVIEW PROCESS

The Hike Ontario Strategic Planning Committee made the review of the Vision statement the first order of business at its kick-off meeting on July 4, 2009.

The Strategic Planning Committee had the following observations about the Compass 2010 Vision statement:

- The current version of the Vision statement makes it sound like Hike Ontario aspires to be a library or repository for hiking information and resources. This doesn’t reflect Hike Ontario’s current direction which has more of a service delivery orientation.
- We are an all volunteer organization and the current vision is unrealistic given the available resources.

² Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, p. 156

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- There have been a lot of accomplishments that align with the current vision statement (e.g. Safe Hiker Program, Young Hikers Program).
- In today's world, being the #1 source of province-wide resources and information may not be relevant because there are a lot of other resources out there. People can "google" hiking trails and get a lot of other sources.
- We should not duplicate the database that someone else has, just link to it. In fact, this is what we do now with the Hike Ontario web site link to the Ontario Trails Council (OTC) web site when people type "find your trail".
- There is a disconnect between our current vision and what we actually do. The current vision focuses on the unaffiliated trails. The vision statement doesn't really capture the need to serve the member hiking Clubs.

The Strategic Planning Committee then developed a draft Compass 2015 Vision statement through a series of brainstorming sessions and used guidelines from an external resource to evaluate the effectiveness of the early drafts³.

It was during this review process that the Strategic Planning Committee concluded that:

- It was concluded that Hike Ontario's products and services are probably aimed at three groups of stakeholders:
 - Hiking Associations and Clubs
 - Non-affiliated hikers and walkers (i.e. "non-joiners")
 - Non-hiking organizations such as Health Units, Scouts, Conservation Areas.
- It was agreed that it would be helpful to analyze the current products and services that Hike Ontario offers by stakeholder group (Stakeholder Analysis).

The draft Compass 2015 Vision statement was reviewed with the Hike Ontario Executive Committee on September 10, 2009.

The draft Compass 2015 Vision statement was presented to the Hike Ontario Board of Directors for review and approval at the regularly scheduled meeting on September 26, 2009.

³ Beyond Entrepreneurship, p.73-74

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2.4. COMPASS 2015 VISION STATEMENT

The Compass 2015 Vision that was approved at the September 26, 2010 meeting of the Board of Directors was:

“Hike Ontario is the province’s most valuable support resource for hiking and walking groups and users.”

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3. SWOT ANALYSIS

This Chapter describes the approach that was used to conduct the SWOT analysis and summarizes the results from that work.

3.1. SWOT DEFINITION

SWOT analysis is one of the classic strategic planning tools.

It assesses the organization's internal and external environment:

- Internal: strengths and weaknesses
- External: opportunities and threats
- SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

The results of the SWOT analysis are used to discern the strategic issues and options confronting the organization.

3.2. APPROACH

The Strategic Planning Committee used the following approach to conduct the SWOT analysis:

STEP	ACTION
1	The Strategic Planning Committee brainstormed SWOTs individually and sent them by e-mail to the facilitator.
2	The facilitator consolidated the SWOT information and grouped the inputs into the four categories: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
3	The Strategic Planning Committee met by Skype™ conference call on August 10, 2009 to review and elaborate upon the SWOT information.
4	The Strategic Planning Committee then took a first crack at discerning the patterns within the SWOT data in order to come up with the initial list of strategic issues. This information was reviewed by the Committee on September 3, 2009.
5	The results of the SWOT analysis were presented to the Hike Ontario Board at the September 26, 2009 meeting.

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3.3. SWOT ANALYSIS

The detailed SWOT analysis is contained in Appendix 1.

3.4. IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC THEMES

The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the individual SWOT statements to look for patterns within the data.

Five strategic themes were identified:

- Building a sustainable organization
- Creating value for members and non-members alike
- Developing and delivering programs for all stakeholders
- Promoting hiking and walking, and pedestrian trails
- Developing effective organization and systems.

3.5. PRIORITIZATION OF STRATEGIC THEMES

The strategic themes were presented at the September 26, 2009 Board meeting.

The Board members were asked to prioritize the list using a nominal group technique (NGT).

The following is the list of strategic themes, in descending order of priority:

- 1-Building a sustainable organization
- 2-Promoting hiking and walking, and pedestrian trails
- Tied for #3:
 - 3A-Creating value for members and non-members alike
 - 3B-Developing and delivering programs for all stakeholders
- 4-Developing effective organization and systems.

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4. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

This Chapter summarizes the results of the Stakeholder Analysis that was initiated during the review of the Vision statement.

4.1. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS

During the review of the Hike Ontario Vision statement, it was concluded that Hike Ontario's products and services are probably aimed at three groups of stakeholders:

- Hiking Associations and Clubs
- Non-affiliated hikers and walkers (i.e. "non-joiners")
- Non-hiking organizations such as Health Units, Scouts, Conservation Areas.

4.2. LIST OF SERVICES

The current list of products and services offered by Hike Ontario is as follows:

- Advocacy
- Annual Summit
- Best Practices Report
- Hike Leader Certification
- Insurance Program
- Long Distance Awards
- Risk Management Program
- Safe Hiking Program
- Web site
- Young Hikers Program

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4.3. PRIORITY SERVICES

The Hike Ontario member Associations and Clubs were asked to provide feedback on the services that benefit their organizations and should be continued.

The Hike Ontario services that were flagged as being most important to the member Associations and Clubs were:

- Hike Leader Certification
- Insurance Program
- Risk Management Program
- Safe Hiking Program
- Web site.

4.4. RESULTS OF STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The table below analyzes the relationship between Hike Ontario's current products and services and the stakeholder groups which benefit from these initiatives.

The benefits that each stakeholder group perceives and appreciates from Hike Ontario are classified in one of three ways:

- Direct benefit: ⊙
- Indirect benefit: ○
- Not applicable: N/A.

Product/service	Nature of benefit to stakeholder		
	Hiking Clubs	Non-affiliated hikers	Non-hiking org.'s
Advocacy	⊙	○	○
Annual Summit	⊙	○	○
Best Practices Report	⊙	N/A	○
Hike Leader Certification	⊙	⊙	⊙
Insurance Program	⊙	N/A	N/A
Long Distance Awards	○	⊙	N/A
Respond to Info. Requests	⊙	⊙	○
Risk Management Program	⊙	○	N/A
Safe Hiking Program	⊙	⊙	⊙
Young Hikers Program	○	⊙	⊙

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5. STRATEGIC ISSUES

This Chapter describes the work carried out by the Strategic Planning Committee to delve further into the underlying causes and consequences of the issues embedded in the Strategic Themes.

5.1. DEFINITION OF A STRATEGIC ISSUE

A strategic issue is a fundamental policy question or critical challenge that affects an organization's mandates, mission and values; product or service level and mix; clients, users, or payers; or cost, financing, organization, or management⁴.

Strategic issues usually involve conflicts or trade-offs:

- What (ends)
- How (means)
- Why (philosophy)
- Where (location)
- When (timing)
- Who (persons who benefit from or are disadvantaged by different ways of resolving the issue).

5.2. FRAMING OF STRATEGIC ISSUES

The Strategic Planning Committee delved further into each strategic theme by asking the following three questions:

- What's the issue?
- Why do we think it is an issue?
- What are the consequences of not addressing the issue?

The intent of this step was to provide additional insight into the root causes and reasons for solving the each issue before starting to develop strategy options.

⁴ Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, p.30

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5.3. THEME #1: *BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION*

This was the issue that was flagged as the most important one by the Board at the September 26, 2009 meeting.

The responses to the framing questions for strategic theme #1 were:

- What's the issue?
 - Insufficient people to deliver our services
 - Current funding arrangement precludes having paid staff
- Why do we think it is an issue?
 - We're not getting services out to the member clubs and the general public
 - We have a large Board but most club reps are not involved in service delivery; clubs probably don't have the capacity
- What are the consequences of not addressing the issue?
 - Volunteer burnout (Core Executive)
 - Spending too much time trying to deliver services and this takes away time from service development
 - Inconsistency and lack of follow through
 - Value of Hike Ontario would be undermined.

5.4. THEME #2: *PROMOTING HIKING AND WALKING, AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS*

This was the issue that was flagged as the second most important one by the Board at the September 26, 2009 meeting.

The responses to the framing questions for strategic theme #2 were:

- What's the issue?
 - We are not making effective use of existing promotional programs (e.g. Safe Hiker, Best Practices, Young Hiker, Summit, Ontario Hiking Week)
- Why do we think it is an issue?
 - Reliance on volunteers to implement these programs
 - Money has been spent developing programs; but money has not been allocated to delivery
- What are the consequences of not addressing the issue?
 - We don't attract hikers to our trails
 - Loss of trust if we don't deliver

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- Lose Hike Ontario volunteers (apathy because programs are developed and not used).

5.5. OTHER THEMES

The Strategic Planning Committee did not conduct the “strategic issue framing” exercise for strategic themes 3A, 3B and 4.

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6. STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This Chapter provides an overview of the Compass 2015 strategy for the 2010-2015 timeframe.

6.1. APPROACH

The Strategic Planning Committee recommended that Compass 2015 goals and objectives be developed as a two-tiered plan:

- Achievement of short to medium term goals related to Strategic Theme #1 between 2010 and 2012
 - Rationale: solving Strategic Theme #1 helps with issues 2, 3A, 3B and 4.
- Development of a road map which addresses the all of the Strategic Themes and provides guidance on where Hike Ontario will be in 2015 and how it will get there.

The recommendation was approved by the Hike Ontario Board of Directors at the May 15, 2010 meeting.

6.2. SHORT TERM STRATEGY

The short term strategy focuses primarily on Strategic Theme #1: *Building a Sustainable Organization*.

The strategies and high level action plan for addressing Strategic Theme #1 are summarized below:

STRATEGY	ACTION PLAN (HIGH LEVEL)
Get paid staff	Prepare a Business Plan for financial sustainability. Create our own revenue and complement this with grants. (Obstacle – funding). Develop job description.
Formal volunteer development program (including recruitment screening, and training)	Develop and implement a <i>Volunteer Manual</i> that would capture all of the relevant areas. Try to leverage what others have done.
Enhance volunteer recognition (Hike Ontario volunteers)	Publicize recognition activities and get some promotion for Hike Ontario. Develop a volunteer recognition policy. Nominate volunteers for the Ontario Citizenship Award. May fall under Certification and Awards Committee.

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Be more selective recruiting volunteers: longer term commitment and higher level of skills.	Cover in volunteer manual.
Cut back on service delivery; fewer but stronger services	Prioritize the services and focus on the ones that are most valued by stakeholders and/or can help us achieve sustainability. Find out who can deliver these services (gaps that need to be filled). Expanded mandate: Certification, Education & Awards Committee have a role to play.

The short term goals are:

- Get paid staff
 - Define the job description for the paid staff person
 - Estimate hours and funding requirements
- Focus on improving the delivery of the priority services
 - Concerted and planned rollout of services
- Improve volunteer development and recognition activities
 - Develop a *Volunteer Manual*
 - Develop volunteer recognition policies
 - Enhance recognition activities.

6.3. LONG TERM STRATEGY

The long term goals for Hike Ontario related to strategic issues 2, 3A, 3B and 4 are as follows:

- Strategic Theme #2: Promoting hiking and walking, and pedestrian trails
 - The visibility of Hike Ontario has been increased.
 - All 200 copies of the *Best Practices* document have been distributed; potential recipients are: Parks, Conversation Areas and Clubs.
 - Presentations have been made at conferences (municipal parks and recreation, Ontario Parks, Conservation Areas, Bruce Trail, OPHEA) to stimulate interest in Hike Ontario programs
 - Update/refresh the Hike Ontario web site.
- Strategic Theme #3A: Creating value for members and non-members alike
 - All trail member Associations and Clubs have developed and implemented risk management practices taking into consideration the Hike Ontario Risk Management Key Elements/Framework

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- Strategic Theme #3B: Developing and delivering programs for all stakeholders
 - 2,000 copies of the Young Hiker Program have been sold.
 - Every School Board in the province has had the opportunity to participate in the Young Hiker Program.
- Strategic Themes #3A & 3B: by 2015
 - 50 Safe Hike Program instructors have been trained and are offering courses to generate revenues and to get people more active and using the Trails in the various regions =50 courses per year as a minimum
 - The number of Hike Leader Certification course instructors has been increased to fifteen; number of courses per year remains the same.
- Strategic Theme #4: Developing effective organization and systems
 - A method for completing a sale and fulfilling sales orders has been completed.

6.4. ROADMAP

The diagram below illustrates the rollout of the Hike Ontario strategies over the 2010-2015 planning timeframe.

Strategic Initiative	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Sustainability: get paid staff	Job description	Hire & Train Staff				
Promotion:						
• Best Practices Report	All copies distributed					
• Web site		Update/refresh				
• Conferences	Make presentations and be visible with display					
YHP Sales Campaign:	Trial Marketing	Approach School Bds	Ramp up to other groups	Sales in full swing	Evaluate & refresh	Evaluate & refresh
Safe Hiker Program:						
• Instructors	40	42	45	47	50	50
• Courses per year	7	42	75	80	90	100
Hike Leader Cert. Prog.						
• Instructors	9	10	11	12	14	15
• Courses per year	19	20	20	20	20	20
• Trainees	200	200	200	200	200	200
Risk Management: Key Elements	Launch	Clubs start to implement	25% adoption	50% adoption	75% adoption	100% adoption

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7. REFERENCES

The following references were consulted during the Compass 2015 strategic planning process.

1. Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: Revised Edition, John M. Bryson, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.
2. Beyond Entrepreneurship: Turning Your Business Into An Enduring Great Company, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992

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8. APPENDICES

8.1. APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF SWOT DATA

STRENGTHS

- Core of committed volunteers
- Well developed, professional programs
- High level of expertise and experience of board members
- Website
- Strategic Plan
- Office volunteers
- Insurance Program
- The work that our member clubs do
- Our certification courses are a major strength in that they provide an opportunity to generate revenue for Hike Ontario; they could play a major role in making HO self-sustainable
- Our Young Hiker's Program is a strength as it can help promote hiking in the next generation
- Recent success: our certification courses are becoming more recognized in the outdoor industry (as people have been taking them for professional development purposes as well as to put on their resume)
- Our volunteers have many different backgrounds and talents
- There has been a strong attempt to meet the current Vision Statement using an effective website, by operating an office using volunteers and by creating resources such as Best Practices, Safe Hiker, Young Hiker and Ambassador discs.
- There is a tremendous pool of talent and experience connected with Hike Ontario.
- There are Grants available which we can use to put our programs into wider circulation.
- Continuing to review Compass 2010 has created accountability and progress towards many of the goals that were set in 2005.
- Valuable information resources provided to hiking clubs: e.g. Funding Took Kit, Ambassador Program.
- Hike Ontario facilitates networking and information sharing among Trail Clubs.
- The various programs such as Safe Hikers and Hike Leader that HO has developed. This provides a direct link to our stated goals increasing and promoting hiking.
- Meeting place for group representatives to meet and exchange ideas.
- The wealth of experience within the member organizations

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WEAKNESSES

- 100% volunteer run
- Volunteer recruitment & retention
- Funding
- Poor and/or infrequent delivery of programs
- Some members unclear of HO value
- Lack of public awareness of HO
- We are not self-sustainable
- Although we have been able to accomplish many things, we are run by volunteers and there is only so much we can expect from these individuals
- Hike Ontario, and member clubs are chronically short of volunteers; this puts too much on the shoulders of existing volunteers; ultimately we are limited by available man-power (as we seem to have no shortage of ideas!)
- Many people have never heard of Hike Ontario
- We are weak at promoting our member clubs to the general public
- We are not a strong information resource on hiking
- Younger people today are not 'joiners' (i.e. they do not join groups such as hiking clubs)- we have no way of reaching out to these individuals and no services that we can offer these individuals
- An all Volunteer organization which has to cover a large province with limited financial resources can achieve limited targets in providing information and resources without risking volunteer fatigue.
- It is unrealistic to expect us to match what OTC and other groups with paid staff can achieve given our limited resources.
- What's the succession plan for the office of President?
- More support for board development for member organizations
- Not repeat the information that is readily available on the web unless there is a very specific benefit to HO or its members/general public.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Creation of staff positions
- Expansion of HO membership to include non-traditional members such as health units, CA's etc.
- Website should be updated more often and provide more interactive opportunities
- New partnerships and collaborations
- Facilitate greater information sharing between member clubs
- We have the potential to be THE information resource on hiking and trails in Ontario (through certification programs and promotion of member clubs)
- Reaching out to the general public- an opportunity that we have not really tapped into
- We need to figure out how to reach out to the generation of non-joiners and determine what HO can offer these individuals

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- We have a website that can accomplish so much more: we can add more info on hiking in general, make it more interactive, have a feature trail each month with photos (something that would make a random internet-surfer say “Wow! I NEED to go there!” Perhaps we change all the photos on the website to photos from our trails (Check out www.mec.ca to see how they credit the photos on the site [put your mouse over the little camera icon]- we could do something similar on our site)
- We are fortunate in that there are many ways that we can “spin” hiking in order to obtain grants or even reach out to different groups of people (Examples: it is a great form of exercise, it helps promote environmental values, etc.)
- There are areas of support to clubs that we could provide such as trail construction information, board renewal processes, risk management guidelines and political lobbying.
- We have programs "ready to roll" in Best Practices, Young Hikers, Safe Hikers, Hike Leadership and Ambassador disc PowerPoint presentations that can be put into place at a time when Grants (Ministry of Health Promotions, TD Friends of the Environment are available to promote hiking as a physically beneficial, environmentally friendly activity.
- Demographics favour hiking as Baby Boomers retire and look for a safe healthy and economical way to stay active.
- Technology may help us communicate quickly and effectively.
- Leverage: take advantage of previously developed products and information.
- Ease the load on volunteers by focusing Hike Ontario’s energies on fewer initiatives.
- HO has several excellent programs mentioned above which could reach a wider audience.
- The potential to partner with other organizations to help promote these programs and future programs.
- Partnerships could also help member organizations increase turnout and membership.
- Lack of urban presence of Hike Ontario: people aren’t aware of hiking/walking opportunities in urban areas – Hike Ontario could help with this.
- Reach out to ethnic communities and new Canadians.

THREATS

- Funding
 - Currently based upon projects and grants.
 - Lack of long term stability.
 - No regular source of funding other than Club dues.
- Volunteer burn-out
- Succession planning
- As membership grows, board composition could become unmanageable under current by-laws
- External perception of HO as elitist and exclusionary
- We need to pay attention to what we can offer our member clubs and ensure that membership to Hike Ontario continues to be valuable to these clubs
- Losing trails to development, fear of lawsuits, etc. is a threat

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- Losing more volunteers- this would make it even harder to carry out our ideas
- Lack of funding
- Technology is a threat to member clubs- with maps becoming available online, the need for guidebooks may diminish; clubs need another source of revenue- Hike Ontario should be at the forefront of figuring this out (for example, HO certification courses could help generate revenue for member clubs when they host a course)
- Clubs are stretched financially and manpower wise and need support.
- Communication with club does not always yield responses.
- It costs money and time to go to meetings across the province.
- The need to effectively succession plan is difficult if we can't attract new and energetic volunteers.
- Lack of succession plans.
- Communications challenges: web site only goes so far; lack of a more personal manner for communicating with the Clubs.
- HO perceived by other trail use organizations as elitist and that HO wants to exclude other groups/users.