

Top 10 List for Green/Sustainable Trails

1. Design an experience into your trail. Using careful design take trail users along a variety of habitats, historic sites, vistas, interesting landforms and user facilities; interpret the interesting features along the way via kiosks and informational signage.
2. Control access to wet areas, steep slopes, critical habitats and other culturally or environmentally sensitive areas. Design periphery routes with access points such as boardwalks for closer observation. Use this as an opportunity to educate the public on the value of protecting these areas.
3. Manage stormwater through natural infiltration practices to keep water off and away from the trail using porous surfacing (check with your design contractor for ADA accessible options), water bars, cross vanes, swales, etc.
4. Sustainable trailhead improvements may include: pervious paving for the parking lot, solar lighting, certified lumber for structures, composting toilets, native landscaping, etc.
5. Enhance riparian areas between the trail and the rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands.
6. Manage/control invasive plants along the trail. Replant these areas with natives (try to select species that are fast growing to prevent the invasives from reestablishing). Refer to the following website, "Native Plant Center" <http://www.nativeplantcenter.net/?q=database>, for information on native plants for a variety of habitats.
7. Select recycled content materials for interpretive signage, benches, observation areas, mile markers, etc.
8. Keep users on the trail with clear markers and signs; educate on the importance of staying on the trail to limit environmental damage and a "bad" trail experience for others. Meet the users' expectations/need; designers may need to develop trail opportunities for multiple uses.
9. Foster a sense of stewardship responsibility/ethic among the trail users; host volunteer trail maintenance days, cleanup days, restoring native vegetation days, educate users on the importance of the sustainable practices used throughout the trail, etc.
10. Whenever possible use local contractors to design and develop the trail using local resources.