



North Shore Mountain Bike Association 101

Understanding the Organization's Function and Purpose

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Vision and Mission Statements

Vision

We are a **volunteer driven non-profit organization** dedicated to caring for a **sustainable trail network within the community.**

Mission Statement

Trails for all, trails forever!

The Origins of the North Shore Mountain Bike Association

The NSMBA was formed in the winter of 1997 in response to trail sabotage on mountain bike-specific trails on the North Shore. A perceived threat to public access to mountain biking trails on the North Shore from land managers and encroaching residential developments also served as a catalyst for the formation of the organization. There were suggestions that Grouse Mountain intended to take over the Fromme trails and charge users to access the trails; that further housing development would take away trails on Cypress, Fromme and Seymour; and that B.C. Parks officials on Seymour would close down trail access. The problems facing North Shore mountain bikers included the lack of a grassroots organization capable of formulating a united response to these potential and future threats. Although local mountain bike shops and the mountain bike industry were key stakeholders in the future of mountain biking on the North Shore, their focus was on running and maintaining their businesses.

In response to this reality and rumours in the winter of 1997, an impromptu and informal meeting at the Black Bear Neighborhood Pub resulted in the decision to form a mountain bike advocacy group for the North Shore. After much discussion, the name was chosen, an executive was elected and a decision was made to incorporate as a not-for-profit society.

In 2010 the Board of Directors crafted a new Vision and Mission and began rebuilding the organization. Since this time, the organization has grown significantly, established strong relationships with key stakeholders & land managers as well as engaging the community, and has revitalized much of the trail network on Fromme and Seymour mountains.

The NSMBA recognizes and acknowledges that it is not a decision-maker with respect to trails other than by delegation from land managers, members, and the community at large. Any respect the NSMBA has from the community is earned and must be continually earned by the NSMBA's actions and words.

Priorities identified to ensure the ongoing success of the NSMBA include:

Capacity

A primary focus is to build capacity within our community and affect positive change. The Trail Adoption Plan and other community initiatives have been created to harness the power of volunteerism and partner with local industry.

Education

A second focus is to improve the effectiveness of the organization. The North Shore Trail Academy was created to train leaders within the community. An adaptable approach to sustainable solutions, the program has now grown province wide, empowering organizations throughout BC and beyond.

The NSMBA currently delivers a youth trail program to educate the next generation of trail users and stewards. Involving youth was identified as a need in our community through the organization's annual survey, and supports "trails forever".

The Nuts and Bolts

Internal NSMBA systems, processes and policies are always being reviewed and updated - including: community and industry engagement, overall program management and administration, grant and funding processes, communications (including website and social media), stakeholder engagement and advocacy, database management, and clearly defining the role and responsibilities of the Association. This is an ongoing process as the organization continues to grow, adapt, and develop.

From Grassroots to Leaders

Stewardship, Education, and Sustainable Trail Solutions

Since 2010 the NSMBA has focused on sustainable trail solutions through educational initiatives, both local and regional, which emphasize long-term care of the trails. The community has become a large and educated group of engaged volunteers who participate in various initiatives including the the Trail Academy, Shore Corps, and the Trail Adoption Plan. All volunteer trail building efforts are led by trained Trail Builders with an appropriate ratio of trained Trail Builders to volunteers.



The NSMBA's goal is to serve the mountain bike community and create a balanced network that provides challenge and progression for all riders. Much of our work addresses issues on multi-use trails so, although primarily a mountain bike association, the NSMBA is cognizant and respectful of all users, often embarking on work that benefits the wider community.

The NSMBA's work plans are always evolving with the needs of the trail network and community; the majority of work focuses on continued revitalization and maintenance of the existing trails to ensure a sustainable network; replacement of technical trail features to ensure safety, challenge, and progression continue to exist in the trail features with are synonymous with 'the North Shore'; and increasing progression options and connectivity to improve the overall balance of the trail network.

Recently, this has been highlighted by improved beginner and intermediate options to complement the existing advanced trails within the North Shore trail inventory, and building climbing routes to improve access and variety within the network. Future work will continue on-going maintenance and repair and expanding opportunities for all mountain bikers on the North Shore.

The organization focuses on a sustainable approach to trail building and maintenance, looking for solutions and techniques that will last, be enjoyable to the targeted trail users, and reduce or have minimal environmental impact. The North Shore is a temperate rainforest, receiving as much as 4000 mm of rain annually, a large amount of of the NSMBA's work focuses on mitigating erosion through water management.

The People in the Organization

The NSMBA relies predominantly on volunteers. The Board of Directors are required to be unpaid for their position as Directors, and are all passionate about the North Shore trails, environment, and the mountain bike community. The Board is supported by our staff, a full time Executive Director, Trail Crew, a part time Sponsorship and Trails Program Manager, Trails Academy & Shore Corps Lead(s) as well as an Administrator.

The Board of Directors

The Directors of the NSMBA are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. The directors are responsible for planning for the future of the organization, as well as overseeing its day to day activities. Each director has a



duty to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the Association.

Directors are expected to be involved in the planning, organization, and execution of the NSMBA's activities including advocacy, fundraising, stakeholder management, community engagement, events, marketing and communication.

Executive Director

The NSMBA Executive Director is responsible for the successful leadership and management of the NSMBA organization according to the strategic direction set by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director will implement the vision and mandate of the NSMBA. The Executive Director provides leadership in identifying priorities and objectives, directs staff and contractors, supports committees and help ensure the NSMBA's financial and organizational viability.

Trail Crew

The NSMBA employs both full and part time trail crew staff to perform trail maintenance, trail building, and other tasks related to the operations of the organization within the network. This work encompasses both maintenance activities, as well as reroutes and new trail construction. The trail crew, and trail crew leader, work with local Land Managers to support management of existing trails and future proposals to the trail network.

Support Staff

The purpose of the NSMBA Support Staff positions is to lead the trails portfolio of the NSMBA according to the strategic direction set by the Board of Directors. The staff will implement the vision and mandate of the NSMBA by implementing the sustainable trail management efforts of the organization.

Sponsorship & Trails Program Manager

The Sponsorship and Trails Program Manager coordinates the Trail Adoption Program supporting both NSMBA Builders and Adopters/Sponsors. This role supports the Executive Director in applying for trail permits to the appropriate Land Managers. They are responsible for Sponsorship relationships and expanding this funding opportunity.

Trail Academy & Shore Corps Leads

The Trail Academy and Shore Corps Leads oversee an engaged volunteer group who have completed, at a minimum, the Trail Academy 100: Foundations of Trail Care course (or previous equivalent). They develop, review, and update the curriculum for the Academy, Advanced Academy, Youth Trail Stewards, and all other trail education courses offered by the NSMBA. This team works to develop our trail stewardship legacy by engaging with the next generation of trail advocates and builders.

Administrator

The NSMBA Administrator position is to support the NSMBA Executive Director with tactical activities and tasks.

Why Join?

Membership

As a mountain biker or other trail user the single most important thing you can do to ensure your ongoing enjoyment of the trails is to become a member of the NSMBA. An individual adult membership is \$40 per year and \$35 for those under the age of 18. A family membership is \$100 per year, and includes two adult and two youth memberships. The NSMBA also offers various levels of sponsorship opportunities which include a yearly membership; please visit www.nsmba.ca for details. Becoming a NSMBA member means that you care about keeping the trails of the North Shore open and accessible. Your membership gives the NSMBA a stronger voice with sponsors, Land Managers, and various levels of government.

Your membership dues provide direct financial support to enable the NSMBA to:

- Purchase materials, tools, and equipment for our volunteer and trail builders to use during trail days.
- Purchase insurance that allows the NSMBA to conduct activities for our members and host trail days.
- Manage and deliver the programs that educate the community on trail building's evolving best practices.
- Engage proactively with Land Managers to ensure their continued support and investment in the trail network.
- Pay professional trail builders to lead specific maintenance projects and trail days, ensuring trails remain open, safe, sustainable, and FUN!

Trail Pass



Supporting the NSMBA with a Trail Pass purchase also helps with our ongoing programs. It is an ideal way to show your support if you are a visiting the North Shore, as well as being a great way to give back to the trails if you are a local rider. All of the funds raised through trail pass sales go directly back to trail work, a Trail Pass is \$15 per year.

The North Shore trails are free to ride by anyone, a trail pass is not an entrance fee for the trails but rather a donation from riders to support trail maintenance.

Your support is essential to fuel our efforts to keep the trails in great condition. Your membership directly supports NSMBA trail work and allows the NSMBA to work with land managers to ensure we have continued access to trails.

Creation of the Trail Adoption Plan, Trail Academy, and Shore Corps

The program was created to foster community stewardship, create sponsor buy-in, and harness the power of volunteerism. The Trail Adoption Plan (TAP) works by partnering ‘Adopters’, local, national, and international businesses and community groups, with a professionally trained, permitted, NSMBA Builder.

The NSMBA Builder completes an Annual Trail Assessment and creates a Work Plan for the adopted trail. The work plan is proposed to the appropriate land manager who then approves the work or makes edits as needed. It is important to note that ultimately the Land Manager needs to approve any and all work conducted on a particular trail. Our greatest opportunity for ensuring “trails forever” is building strong relationships, based on trust and credibility, with the Land Managers.

Once approved by the Land Manager, the NSMBA Builder will then work with the Adopter to jointly deliver up to six trail days. The NSMBA Builder also conducts preventative maintenance on the trail throughout the year.

TAP accounts for approximately 100 trail days each year, contributing approximately 8000+ hours of labour annually. This is the primary driver in maintaining the trail network.

Land Manager approved trails that do not have a sponsor and which are not being cared for by an independent builder will be cared for by the NSMBA. The trail crew, volunteers, and public trail days can be utilized to ensure ongoing

maintenance. The NSMBA would create a work plan and have it approved by the land manager.

The Trail Academy

The NSMBA Trail Academy offers several courses in sustainable trail care practices to organization members. Each course includes a theory session and a practical session on the trail for a hands on learning experience. Enrolment in the NSMBA Trail Academy is free for NSMBA members. Since its inception, over 1000 members have completed the NSMBA Trail Academy. In 2017, the Trail Academy contributed over 1500 hours of volunteer work towards the North Shore trails.

Courses presently offered include:

Trail Academy 100: Foundations of Trail Care

An introduction to trail stewardship, covering the key principles of sustainable trail design and best practices for trail assessment, maintenance, and repair. Emphasis is on environmental protection. This course is a prerequisite for all other courses.

Trail Academy 201: Introduction to Trail Design

Reviews fundamentals of environmental, social, and economic sustainability and explores how these are applied in the trail planning and design process. Emphasizes working with land managers and established trail standards to create an appropriate trail experience for various user groups.

Trail Academy 211: Corners

Corners are a key element of all trails. Participants will learn about design standards and appropriate usage of climbing corners, berms, and switchbacks.

Trail Academy 212: Rock Work

Properly constructed rock work can last for hundreds if not thousands of years. This course covers the construction of rock retaining walls, rock armouring, and other uses of rock in trail design.

Trail Academy 213: Wood Structures

Vancouver's North Shore is famous for its ladder bridges and other wood features, initially built out of necessity. This course covers design principles, trail standards for technical trail features, construction techniques, and assessment of wood structures.



The Shore Corps

Trained in the art of sustainable trail solutions, all members of the Shore Corps have completed Trail Academy 100: Foundations of Trail Care. Members of the Shore Corps help with ongoing projects to improve the trails.

The NSMBA Shore Corps is a vibrant group of volunteers who stay connected through community events, an active Facebook group, and regular newsletters. Ongoing development is available through mentorship programs, advanced trail academy courses, and special projects.

The Shore Corps is part of the NSMBA's commitment to "Trails Forever", ensuring the trails are cared for today and into the future.

Youth Trail Stewards Program

In 2017 the NSMBA began a school outreach program to educate youth in the sustainable care of our trail network. The program is similar to the Trail Academy, and includes a classroom session followed by an on trail session. Emphasis is on environmental responsibility and care.

Trail Building Best Practices

When developing work plans for the trails the NSMBA follows and adheres to the following best practices: Whistler Standards, IMBA Guidelines, and the Best Management Practices of the respective land manager.

The NSMBA uses the most robust applicable standard and applies these principles in our unique topography and climate, with a focus on long term sustainability.

Please visit the following link for a copy of the Whistler Standards:

https://cyclingbc.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/trail_standards_first_edition.pdf

Please visit the following link to access IMBA's trail building resources:

<http://www.imbacanada.com/resources/trail-building>

The NSMBA builds upon this existing foundation of knowledge and creates the highest standard possible to withstand our Sustainability Equation of:

- High usership
- Extreme rainfall
- Easy access

- Year round availability

To achieve this goal of a sustainable trail network and deliver on the NSMBA's mission of 'Trails for all, trails forever' the following activities are required to support the building standards and guidelines:

- Education - Build capacity within our community and encourage leaders for today and tomorrow.
- Relationships - Build strong and positive relations with Land Managers, other trail user groups, and other community stakeholders.
- Unity - Work together as a respectful community towards the common goal Trails for All, Trails Forever.
- Capacity - Continue to engage the community with initiatives like TAP to ensure we are able to keep pace with the increasing usage.
- Etiquette - Create a culture of respect and tolerance in which it is understood the actions of the few affect the opportunities for all.
- Communication - Directors and staff endeavour to clearly communicate the NSMBA's strategy, direction, and work to the community. The NSMBA continually seeks mechanisms to garner input to key decisions and processes of the organization from members and other stakeholders.

Trail Difficulty Rating - How and Why?

The North Shore offers unique riding terrain; trail difficulty ratings must be applied to the topography we have while adhering to globally recognized standards.






Any trail difficulty rating must allow a new rider or visitor to easily ascertain the skill level required for a trail; it must not be based on the relative difficulty compared to other trails in the area or what regular users of the trails are accustomed to riding.

The foundation for the trail difficulty ratings applied on the North Shore come from the Whistler Standards in conjunction with the IMBA Trail Rating Guidelines.

The IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System can:

- Help trail users make informed decisions.
- Encourage visitors to use trails that match their skill level.
- Manage risk and minimize injuries.
- Improve the outdoor experience for a wide variety of users.
- Aid in the planning of future trails.

Many trail networks use this type of system, most notably resort-based mountain biking trail networks. These criteria should be combined with personal judgment and trail-user input to reach the final rating.

Trail Difficulty Rating System					
	Easiest White Circle 	Easy Green Circle 	More Difficult Blue Square 	Very Difficult Black Diamond 	Extremely Difficult DbL. Black Diamond 
Trail Width	72" or more	36" or more	24" or more	12" or more	6" or more
Tread Surface	Hardened or surfaced	Firm and stable	Mostly stable with some variability	Widely variable	Widely variable and unpredictable
Average Trail Grade	Less than 5%	5% or less	10% or less	15% or less	20% or more
Maximum Trail Grade	Max 10%	Max 15%	Max 15% or greater	Max 15% or greater	Max 15% or greater
Natural Obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTF)	None	Unavoidable obstacles 2" tall or less Avoidable obstacles may be present Unavoidable bridges 36" or wider	Unavoidable obstacles 8" tall or less Avoidable obstacles may be present Unavoidable bridges 24" or wider TTF's 2' high or less, width of deck is greater than 1/2 the height	Unavoidable obstacles 15" tall or less Avoidable obstacles may be present May include loose rocks Unavoidable bridges 24" or wider TTF's 4' high or less, width of deck is less than 1/2 the height Short sections may exceed criteria	Unavoidable obstacles 15" tall or greater Avoidable obstacles may be present May include loose rocks Unavoidable bridges 24" or narrower TTF's 4' high or greater, width of deck is unpredictable Many sections may exceed criteria

Trail Signs - What do they mean?

The NSMBA works with the Land Managers to help create the appropriate signage for the trails. The Land Manager is the final authority on signage. The photos below provide example of signage used on trails within the District of North Vancouver; signage from other areas of the North Shore may differ slightly, but should contain and convey the same information. The purpose of these signs is to help promote and foster a trail network that works for all users, and to increase safety by enabling users to successfully navigate the network.

Please remember that we are all ambassadors for mountain biking.

The behaviour of a single mountain biker reflects on the mountain biking community as a whole.

Multi Use Trails

Trails designated as multi use are to be enjoyed by all (mountain bikes, runners, and hikers) – the symbols clearly depict this. The dog paw represents trails which are suitable for commercial dog walkers.

Each user group must share the trail – courtesy has the right of way!



A) Hiking Only

These trails are reserved for foot traffic only, bicycles are not permitted on these trails.



B) Mountain Bike Primary

This designation stipulates that mountain bikes will be the predominant user group; however other user groups may use these trails. Other users should give way to bicycles and should be aware that bicycles will be descending the trails. Foot traffic should use caution when using these trails.



C) One Way Only

Some mountain bike trails are designated one way only to enhance rider safety and reduce risk of collisions.



D) Ascent Trails – Mountain Bike Primary

Ascent trails are purpose built trails for bicycles to climb up. An ascent trail is not built to sustain downhill use – bicycles are not permitted to descend these trails. Foot traffic is free to travel either direction.

When using these trails it is important that foot traffic stay on the trail and not braid corners. This will lead to erosion due to water coursing down the braids.



Who are the Land Managers?

Seymour & Fromme

- BC Parks
- Metro Vancouver

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (“CMHC”) - managed by Recreation Sites and Trails BC (“RSTBC”)
- District of North Vancouver (“DNV”)
- Grouse Mountain Resorts LTD

BC Parks, Metro Vancouver, CMHC, and the DNV are engaged land managers and have clear rules on mountain bike trails on the land they manage.

Any trail work or maintenance in Metro Vancouver, CMHC, and DNV land must be permitted. It is illegal to build or ride in BC Parks unless it is explicitly permitted. BC Parks clearly signs areas where riding is permitted (e.g. Empress Bypass, Old Buck). It is a serious offence to build trails and structures or alter the environment in BC Parks.

In January 2018 the NSMBA and Recreation Sites and Trails BC, as CMHC’s designated land manager, reached a formal trail maintenance agreement for many of the trails within this area. This CMHC agreement is to perform trail maintenance and at this time does not include funding or net new trail design.

The NSMBA works closely with the District of North Vancouver (DNV) and Metro Vancouver to maintain and improve the trail network. With ongoing cooperation we see a bright future and the opportunity to continue to improve the trail network for all styles and abilities of riders. The NSMBA and the DNV have had a Fromme Mountain Trail Maintenance Agreement since 2015 which has contributed \$50,000 in 2015, \$100,000 in 2016 and 2017. The NSMBA looks forward to signing a new funding agreement with the DNV in 2018-2021. At this time Metro Vancouver does not fund NSMBA trail maintenance on their lands.

The NSMBA works closely with Trailforks.com to manage the trail database online. You can view the trails and Land Managers of the North Vancouver area here: <https://www.trailforks.com/region/north-vancouver/>

Cypress

- District of West Vancouver (“DWV”)
- British Properties (“BPP”)
- BC Parks

At this time there is no formal agreement for trails on Cypress. DWV and BPP have a moratorium on new trail development.

The NSMBA is actively engaged with the Cypress Land Managers. The NSMBA's policy is not to undertake any work until a formalized trail agreement is in place with a Land Manager.

Grouse Mountain Resorts LTD

Grouse Mountain Resorts is the owner of land on Fromme, above the 6th switchback along Mountain highway. 7th Secret, Bookwus, Upper Oil Can, and Pile of Rocks are in or partially on their land.

Grouse Mountain Resorts LTD has accepted these trails on their land for several years. In fall of 2014 the NSMBA received a request to inform the Fromme trails users to cease the use, building, and maintenance of trails above the 7th switchback.

Use of public lands, how it works?

Provided by the District of North Vancouver

Crown land is not public in the sense that anyone can use it for anything they want. It is land that is owned by the provincial or federal government, for the benefit of the public. The public is generally permitted to access Crown land, however there is no overriding right by the public to use it without restriction. The *Land Act* and the *Forest Range and Practices Act* makes it an offence to use Crown land without lawful authority or construct a structure on Crown land without authorization.

In the case of the North Shore, many of the recreational trails traverse between three separate public land managers – BC Parks, Metro Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver, each of which has legislation or bylaws governing the management and administration of their recreational lands. For example, Mt. Seymour Park falls under the management of BC Parks, who administers their recreational lands in accordance with the Park Act and the Park Conservancy and Recreation Regulations while Lynn Headwaters Park and Lower Seymour Conservation Area fall under the jurisdiction of Metro Vancouver and are governed by other legislation and bylaws that assign the responsibility to manage the lands.

DNV land is not Crown land, but instead is owned by the District of North Vancouver. The District can set restrictions around its use both in its capacity as the owner of the land and as the local government having authority. The Community Charter gives the District the authority to regulate, prohibit and impose requirements in relation to public places (i.e. parks) per s. 8(3)(b). Parkland in the District falls under the management of the District and is subject to the restrictions set out in the Park Control Bylaw 2733, namely the prohibition against damaging a

park in section 2 and the prohibition against erecting structures in a park without a permit in section 8. In addition, policy documents such as the Fromme Mountain Trail Classification Study set goals and directions for recreational activity.

Policy on Unsanctioned Trails

The NSMBA advocates against the construction of trails or features which have not been authorized or permitted by the land managers. Unsanctioned trails can have a significant impact on the environment.

The proliferation of unsanctioned trails is one of the biggest threats to mountain biking on the North Shore. On land for which the NSMBA has a formal work agreement with a Land Manager, trails or features constructed without the authorization of the Land Manager pose several problems for the NSMBA. Unsanctioned trail construction can limit our ability to maintain existing trails and are a significant deterrent to being permitted to construct any new trails.

Over the last 10 years mountain biking has formally been recognized by the Land Managers who have jurisdiction over Mount Fromme and Mount Seymour. The trail network, which was mainly built prior to this, was evaluated and a trail classification system developed. This process was the mechanism for the Land Managers to legitimize these trails for mountain bike use. It also enabled the NSMBA to conduct authorized trail work on land managed by the DNV, Metro Vancouver, and BC Parks on Mount Fromme and Mount Seymour.

The creation of unauthorized alternate lines on an existing sanctioned trail can place the sanctioned trail at risk. Improperly constructed lines may contribute to erosion and dilute the integrity of the trail. Unpermitted trail work can jeopardize the NSMBA's relationship with the relevant Land Manager. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for the original and/or existing builder.

The NSMBA recognizes that many builders work independently from the NSMBA, and often unsanctioned trails are built out of frustration with the system or from a perceived need for more advanced or varied trail experiences. The NSMBA encourages builders to work within the existing systems and will strive to engage in respectful dialogue with independent builders. The NSMBA encourages communication with independent builders, and will assist permitted builders as requested, to the extent the organization has the capacity and depth to do so.

Developing Concise Work Plans

Each year the NSMBA must submit work plans to each Land Manager; these plans are a request to conduct trail maintenance, care, and enhancements. If approved the NSMBA receives a permit for the work and can then begin to execute the work.

This process holds true for all builders (NSMBA or independent) wishing to conduct sanctioned work on trails on DNV or Metro Vancouver land. Ultimately, it is up to the respective Land Manager to determine what work is permitted.

The Future of the NSMBA

The North Shore Mountain Bike Association (“NSMBA”) Vision and Mission statements were revised and finalized in 2016 by the Board of Directors through multiple SWOT* analysis sessions. The Vision and Mission statements are periodically revisited to ensure that they remain relevant and appropriate.

** A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business venture*

The best way to affect change is to get involved. The NSMBA is an inclusive organization, we welcome your participation and contribution to help drive us forwards in achieving our shared mission and vision.

Join in, become part of the community helping shape the future of the trails on the North Shore. Become a member, volunteer, corporate donor, or Director. Our progress is driven by volunteers and the fuel is passion.

The NSMBA is focused on the needs of the mountain biking community as a whole. We strive to support the evolution and ongoing growth of the sport of mountain biking. We engage in a preventative maintenance model, the desired outcome is a gentler transition between our past and the future. This constant evolution is the key to having a world class trail system.

A major factor in this evolution is etiquette respect. The NSMBA seeks to foster a community that not only has respect for the environment but also fosters respect for all users of the trails.

This philosophy in combination with adherence to best building practices is the NSMBA’s approach to fulfilling our mission of Trails for all, Trails forever!