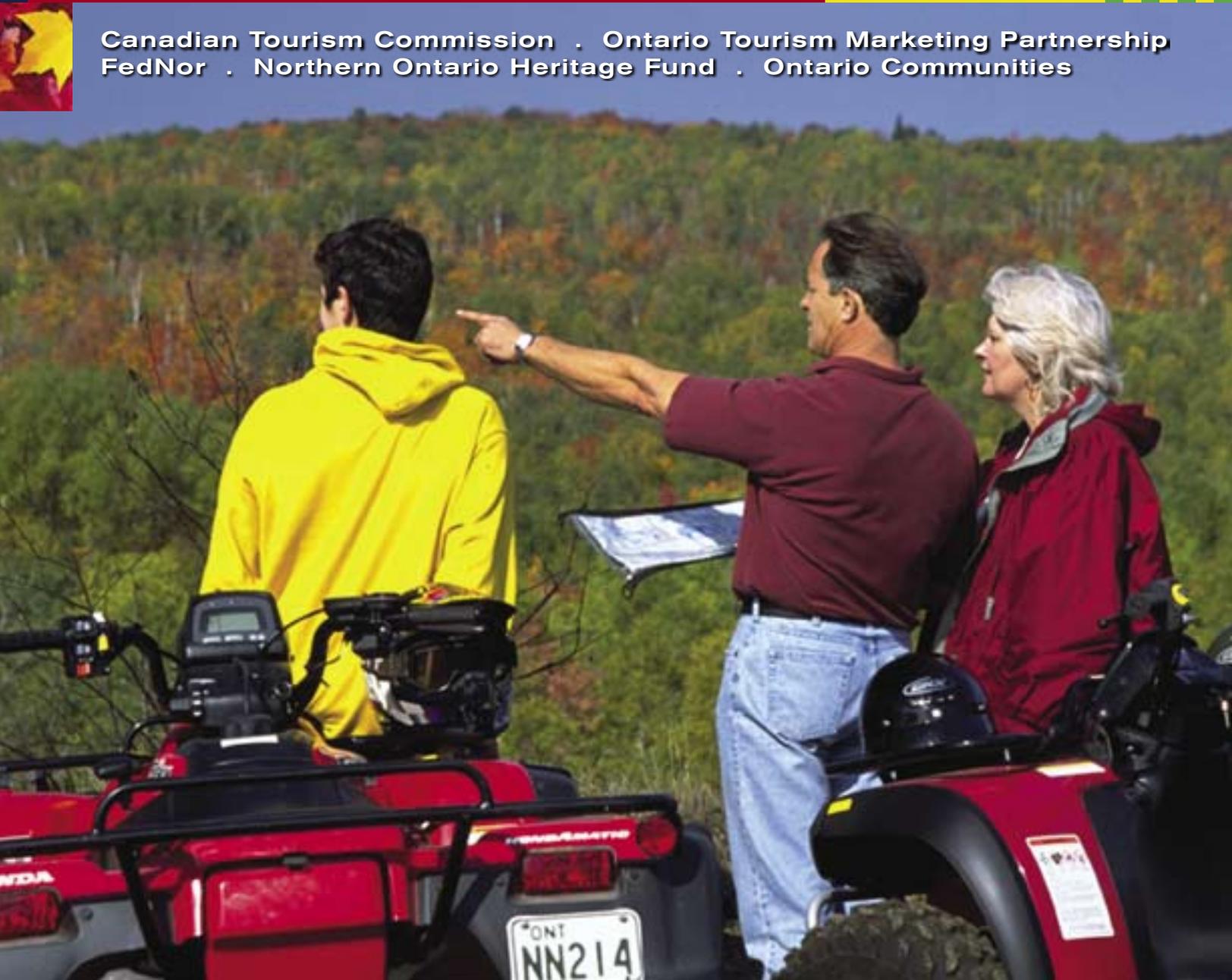


A Development Manual for a Community-based **ATV Tourism Product**



Canadian Tourism Commission . Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership
FedNor . Northern Ontario Heritage Fund . Ontario Communities



Fundamental concepts of the Community-based ATV Tourism Model

- **Stimulus to economic development**
Tourism; not just local recreation.
- **Based on good business principles**
Linking community to the market.
- **Responsible to all interests**
Respect for the environment and the public
- **Community based**
But does not presume province-wide application.
- **Based on shared-use of trails**
- **Goal is long-term sustainability**

For more information and/or to order printed copies of the Manual see the
ATVOntario website, www.atvontario.com

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CANADIAN
TOURISM
COMMISSION



COMMISSION
CANADIENNE
DU TOURISME



A Development Manual for community-based tourism products

This publication provides a summary of a step-by-step Development Manual that has been prepared in support of a community-based tourism product model. The 26 templates of the manual are summarized in the publication to help communities understand the model and complete the steps to implementation. The full manual and templates are reproduced on the CD-ROM that is included with this publication or can be downloaded at www.atvontario.com

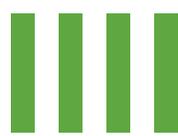
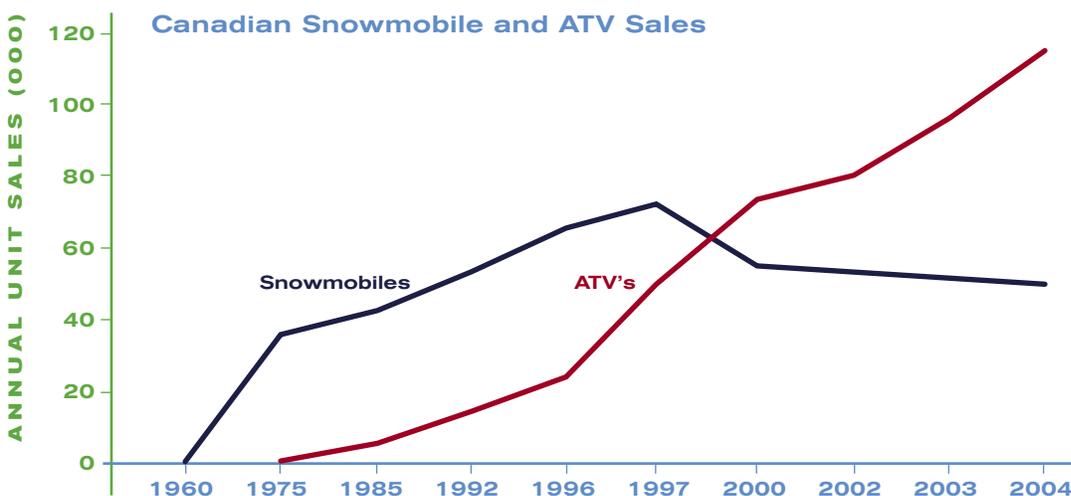
The manual is the result of a project that has involved agencies of the federal government of Canada, the Province of Ontario and a network of communities in the province, particularly the community of Elliot Lake.

The model is applied here to a tourism product built around an experience based on the use of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) on a shared-use community trail system. The decision to consider the development of a tourism product is made community-by-community. Many communities will not develop an ATV tourism product and the manual does not presume province-wide application. Those communities that do develop an ATV product in Ontario are meant to become part of a product marketing alliance – ATVOntario.

The model and the manual can be adapted to many other tourism products – particularly those that are trail-based.

Growth in ATV sales and the need for responsible places to ride create the impetus

The impetus for the manual came from the rapid increase in the sale of ATV's in North America, particularly since 1996. The chart shows how ATV sales now outstrip snowmobile sales and are expected to continue to do so in the future both in Canada and the United States.



This reality of the market has created an opportunity to develop a tourism product that is built around the ATV experience. But at the same time, it has created a challenge to ensure that ATVs are used responsibly and do not impede the enjoyment of trails and public lands by other user groups.

The manual responds to that challenge, demonstrating,

- How to take advantage of the ATV tourism opportunity on community shared-use trails,
- How to do it following a community-based process that respects the views and values of everyone, and
- How to be pro-active about environmental responsibility.

Building the community-based model into Product Alliances and Product Clubs

The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMP) is an agency of the Government of Ontario. Reporting to the Ontario Minister of Tourism and Recreation, the agency is responsible for marketing Ontario as a tourism destination in partnership with Ontario's tourism industry.

Working with the tourism industry, the OTMP has developed many "Product Alliances". Existing product alliances include "Arts in the Wild", "Paddling Ontario", "Muskie Fishing" and several others built around the categories of Urban Entertainment as well as Culture Heritage and Learning.

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is a Crown corporation of the Government of Canada with the objective of helping to sustain a vibrant and profitable tourism industry. Its role at the federal level is similar to that of the OTMP and indeed the two organizations work co-operatively. Like the OTMP's product alliances, the CTC has a very successful Product Clubs Program. So far, 43 product clubs have formed.





In light of the growing sales of ATV's and the evident demand for places to ride, the OTMP and the CTC saw the potential of a "product alliance" in Ontario built around the ATV experience that fit within the category of "outdoor products". Indeed, the OTMP Outdoor Committee was instrumental in moving the initiative forward.

Together with the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), an agency of the Provincial Government and the Federal Government's regional development program for Northern Ontario, FedNor – the OTMP, assisted by the CTC, agreed to undertake a Pilot Project for the development of an ATV Tourism product that could form the basis of a product alliance – ATVOntario.

The product and market development process followed by the OTMP market alliances and the CTC product clubs are similar. While the alliances and clubs group individual tourist operators, the ATV alliance is based on communities in order to recognize the responsibility that must be taken by a much wider group of interests for a shared-use trail system.

The OTMP Market Development Process

<p>PHASE 1 <i>Outlining the Priority</i> Project Development</p>	<p>Initial project development including research, analysis and directions for further development.</p>
<p>PHASE 2 <i>Clarify the Experience</i> Supplier and Experience Inventory Development</p>	<p>Focus on the market opportunity, develop Best Practices and quality criteria, and begin the process of building the Alliance through training.</p>
<p>PHASE 3 <i>Testing the Opportunity with the Alliance</i> Industry-driven Development Year Plan</p>	<p>Working together in the Alliance on branding, packaging, supplier development, marketing and product launch.</p>
<p>PHASE 4 <i>Traditional Marketing</i> 3-Year Plan and Intergration into OTMP Marketing</p>	<p>Building an Alliance for financial sustainability through marketing and sales.</p>
<p>PHASE 5 <i>Sustainability</i></p>	<p>Achieveing financial sustainability, on-going tracking of results, and exploring new opportunities.</p>



The City of Elliot Lake provides the basis for the community model

Elliot Lake, a community in Northern Ontario, was chosen as the initial “Signature Site” to be involved in the pilot project as the community had demonstrated the commitment and willingness to work with all interests to develop an ATV Tourism product. The Elliot Lake ATV Club and the City of Elliot Lake had previously spent a great deal of time, effort and resources in preparing for the opportunity. The community recognized the tourism opportunity of developing and maintaining organized shared-use trails - an opportunity identified in the community’s strategic plan. The Elliot Lake experience was the beginning of the community-based Tourism Model.

The Pilot Project began with the OTMP Market Development process and called for the creation of a “Development Manual” (also referred to as the “Best Practices” Manual). Other communities and groups that had expressed an interest in ATV development were included in the consultation process to refine the tourism model in preparation for eventual participation in the ATV product alliance.



The Concept of “community”

Community can be a wide concept but it is used in the manual in the sense of a geographical location. The geography of a community will most often be defined by:

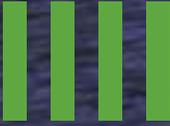
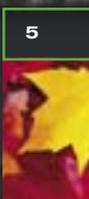
The boundaries of a single municipality or First Nation or a group of municipalities and/or First Nations.

But a community may also exist outside of municipal boundaries (e.g. unincorporated areas of Northern Ontario that are not within any municipality). Communities in unincorporated areas may be part of a wider community that includes municipalities and/or First Nations, or—under certain conditions—they might be “stand alone” communities.

The land base of the community for tourism development will likely be Crown land but may also include private lands. Crown lands or “public lands” are owned by the Province of Ontario and may be within or outside of municipal boundaries. A private land base is more common in southern Ontario.

The objective is to maximize economic development through tourism

A community-based model is one that emphasizes the development of a “destination” tourism product through the collaborative efforts of everyone in the community. The objective is to *maximize the economic development benefits for the whole community, while respecting all environmental and cultural values.*



Insofar as the tourism product is dependent upon access to Crown Land, a key aspect of being community-based is full respect for the environment and for all users of the resource base. This respect is meant to be pro-active, working in close co-operation with the responsible agencies of the federal and provincial governments, particularly the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that manages Ontario's Crown land.

Fundamental concepts of the Community-based ATV Tourism Model

- The purpose of the model is to provide a stimulus for Economic Development – the primary focus is tourism not local recreation.
- It is based on good business principles. The development of a Business Plan for linking the Community to the Tourism Industry is essential.
- The model is meant to be “responsible” to all interests, particularly those relating to respect for the environment, respect for Crown and private land and respect for the public in general, and their safety.
- It is community-based and does not presume Province-wide application.
- The model is based on the shared-use of trails and other community assets.
- Sustainability over time is the goal of the model. The development of a good Business Plan is key to product sustainability and further development.

In Ontario, the most important interface between a trail development project and compliance with environmental regulations will likely be through the new *Class Environmental Assessment for MNR Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects (Class EA)*. This replaces the previous *Class Environmental Assessment for Small Scale MNR Projects (1992)*, as well as a number of Exemption/Declaration Orders.

Although the development of a particular tourism product may be spearheaded by a single group such as a club, a business organization or the municipality, it must quickly evolve into a project that is “owned” by the whole community, thereby incorporating local government interests, private sector interests and other organization interests. The product must mesh with the entire development plan for the community and avoid going off in directions that the community does not support. It is meant to build upon existing assets and interests.

A community-based model will incorporate the best elements of models that have been implemented elsewhere, and standards that apply elsewhere. The community will work towards, and implement standards that exist at the level of the Province, or wider, that are essential for the safety of trail users and the general public, and that promote full respect for the environment. But ultimately, decisions such as the best approach in relation to the implementation will always

be made at the level of the particular community. The Development Manual is not a “cookie-cutter” model. It suggests “Best Practices” that will have to be adapted to the profile and needs of individual communities.

A Tourism Model based on a shared-use community trail system

A Tourism Model can be thought of as a “recipe” for the design, development, marketing and sustainability of a tourism product or set of tourism products. The definition of a “tourist” depends on individual perspectives. Within the manual, tourists are generally defined as visitors to Ontario from outside of the Province – particularly

visitors from the United States. However, for Northern Ontario the definition of “tourist” would also include “domestic” visitors from southern Ontario.

Tourism opportunities that are based upon trail systems whether for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, or a variety of other non-motorized and motorized uses, have long been recognized. The Tourism Model that is developed in the manual is applied to tourism products that are based upon a community “shared-use” trail system. A shared-use trail system is a network of trails in a community that can serve both motorized and non-motorized uses. *Shared-use does not mean that all trails are open to all users at the same time.* While the system as a whole is shared-use, some trail segments may be single-use or shared only for defined purposes. A shared-use trail system of one community does not necessarily link to other communities – although some segments might. Also, not all trails in the vicinity of a community will necessarily be part of the community system.

A tourism product, not just a local recreation product

Many residents of a community will use trails as part of their recreational lifestyle. The model described in the manual, however, is centred on the development of a tourism product not a local recreational product.

Naturally, links between tourism and recreation exist. In some cases, tourism products can “evolve” from local recreational use. This is generally the model of how snowmobiling developed across the Province of Ontario and how it continues to develop today. While the tourism model recognizes these links, it is premised on the direct development of a tourism experience, from which local recreational use can be an important spin-off.



Because of the cost of trail development, the community is not going to build two sets of trails – one for tourism and the other for local recreation use, therefore, the same trail base will be used for both. Right from the beginning, the requirements of both tourism and recreation must be explicitly acknowledged. The main task for the community is to secure cooperation from everyone in building a trail system that will place a direct emphasis on the tourism experience, while at the same time seeking to maximize local recreational opportunities. Project planning must acknowledge complementary objectives between user groups, but should not attempt to convert all recreation groups to “tourism promoters”.

A detailed Business Plan drives the Model

A detailed Business Planning process drives the Tourism Model. The purpose of the Business Plan is to devise the best community-based tourism experience possible, one that fits with community resources and responds to, or initiates, market demand. The clear goal is to attract new people and new money into the community. The product is not necessarily meant to be “stand-alone”. The tourism “experience” can be complex and an ATV ride can be combined with other tourism experiences in the local community. Sustainability over time is the ultimate goal of the model.



The experience provided by the community ATV tourism product uses trails as the impetus for development but capitalizes on heritage and cultural assets as well as natural features of the environment.

The Business Plan consequently follows a “development matrix” approach that connects the “Community” with the tourism “Industry”.

A Development Matrix provides the steps

The development of an ATV Tourism product must be driven by a realistic and detailed business planning process. This process is defined by the “Development Matrix” that is at the heart of the community-based ATV tourism model.

The columns of the “Development Matrix” represent project planning in relation to three distinct phases:

- The process to determine whether an ATV Tourism product can be identified for a community (pre-feasibility).
- The process to develop and detail the Business Plan for the identified community-based ATV Tourism product covering both the trail building and tourism product operating components (Business Plan), and
- The activities that must take place to measure the achievement of the Business Plan and quality control of the tourism product (Measurement and Quality Control) that will ensure sustainability.

The Tourism Development Matrix

		Planning Component			
		Pre-feasibility	Business Plan	Measurement	Quality Control
Players	A. Market	Define the tourism opportunities	Marketing Plan Supplier Development Plan	Measure use and satisfaction of tourists/users	Constantly improve product quality
	B. Community	Define the strengths and weaknesses of the community	Community welcome Management Plan	Measure community benefits	Constantly improve community response and maximize benefits
	C. Government	Understand the government parameters and limits on the product	Trail Plan	Measure compliance	Constantly improve partnerships with government
	Decision or Result	Decide whether the community has a product. If so, prepare a Business Plan	Create Tourism Enterprise entity to manage Trail and Product	Use Measurement to guarantee sustainability and to understand the evolution of demand	Sustainability and Growth is the result



The rows of the Development Matrix correlate the Business Planning activities with the Tourism Market the Community and Government parameters. The bottom of each column represents a decision point or a result that must be verified before proceeding with the activities of subsequent phases.

As the Development Matrix is followed, a series of Templates, Tips and Resources in the manual will assist the community in building its ATV tourism product. The Matrix is meant to be applied in a flexible manner that respects the particularities of individual communities.

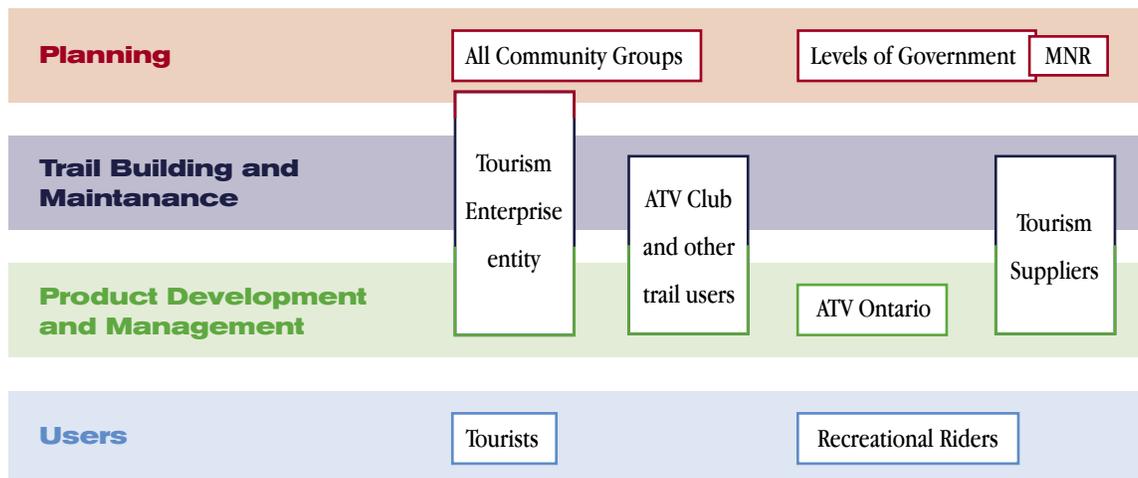
A Tourism Enterprise entity for sustainability

The organization structure is a critical factor in the community-based model. It is the partnerships developed within the community that will provide the resources to develop and implement the steps in the matrix. All planning and design is done at the local level in co-operation with various stakeholders and government representatives. The workload is shared among community organizations, with each organization contributing its own expertise.

Sustainability is the “red line” that runs throughout the whole process of developing a community-based ATV Tourism product. The Development Manual sets out the parameters for the product-planning phase. But the planning phase is followed first by the trail building phase and then the product launch and product management phase. A key element in ensuring sustainability is a clear understanding of the roles of the various community participants. The following exhibit illustrates the Organizational Involvement of the various groups.



Organization Involvement



The manual recommends that each community create or designate a community organization that will be responsible for managing the shared-use trail system, and the ATV Tourism Product. The entity will be referred to as the Tourism Enterprise (name of community), such as Tourism Enterprise Elliot Lake, or Tourism Enterprise Cochrane.

The responsibilities of the Tourism Enterprise entity are as follows:

- On-going planning, consultation and development of the shared-use trail system.
- Operational management of the shared-use trail system including full acceptance of responsibility for the environment, safety, and other compliances within government regulations and parameters.
This function includes arrangement of trail liability insurance
- Operational management of the ATV Tourism product including the coordination of tourism suppliers and other community partners. This includes continual updating of the overall Business Plan and the component Plans.
- Participation as the community representative in ATV Ontario.
- Development of other community-based tourism products linked to the shared-use trail system.
- Management of the measurement and quality control functions linked to the shared-use trail system and the tourism products.

The concept of the Tourism Enterprise entity is that, starting with the ATV Tourism product, it provides a community with a vehicle to develop other tourism products that would make the community a good destination for a variety of outdoor activities. Real sustainability is achieved when the community can offer a professional four-season product mix, and the Tourism Enterprise entity can operate on revenues from packaged sales in accordance with an ongoing operating plan.



The Trail Pass system provides revenue to the Tourism Enterprise entity

For the community-based ATV tourism product, the system is one of “user pay”. This will help recover the costs involved in creating, maintaining and operating the shared-use trail system, and the costs of product development and management. The tourist will be expected to pay for a trail pass (daily pass or multiples thereof) to access the trail system in each particular community. The use of the pass is both time-limited and geography-limited. As such, the ATV tourism model is more like that of a ski resort, where skiers and boarders either purchase a season’s pass or a daily pass and where that pass is only good for a particular resort. Naturally, in some ski areas, cooperative arrangements do develop between resorts and multi-resort passes become available. The same sort of cooperative arrangements may develop between ATV Tourism products in several communities. This can evolve within the framework of the ATVOntario Marketing Alliance.

The visitor may access the Community ATV Tourism product directly by purchasing a trail pass from an approved outlet, but more likely, will purchase it as part of an all-inclusive package offered by a tour wholesaler or retailer. In both cases, a remittance for the value of the trail permit is made to the Tourism Enterprise entity. Revenue from the trail passes is meant to cover all Tourism Enterprise entity product expenses, including trail insurance. At start-up, the Tourism Enterprise entity may want to supplement trail pass revenue with funding from other sources, such as sponsorships.

Local ATV recreational riders are not required to purchase a trail pass but are expected to be Members of their local ATV Club. The limiting condition, however, is that members of the local ATV Club must only be from the local area. Otherwise, a tourist from another location and who is a member of the local club would expect to ride the trails “free” and not have to pay for the tourism trail pass. This would defeat the sustainability aspect of the community-based ATV Tourism Model. It would be up to local ATV Clubs to “police” their own memberships’ use of the ATV-designated trails.

The model for the community-based ATV Tourism product is not that of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC). Their model is based on a single user group whose primary focus is to develop and manage a province-wide recreational trail system from which economic and tourism benefits are a spin-off. The OFSC system is based on the selling of a vehicle trail permit for a fixed annual fee that allows the purchaser to ride on all approved trails throughout the Province. This permit system is governed by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and has the necessary legislation in place to authorize permit sales enforcement on Crown and/or private lands.

To the extent that the OFSC model might be applied to recreational ATV riding in Ontario, it will be necessary to develop “bridges”, or reciprocity agreements, to ensure harmony between the community-based tourism model, and a model based on provincial associations, such as the Ontario Federation of All-Terrain Vehicles (OFATV).

The 19 Sections of the manual include the following major components:

- Explanation of the concept of a community-based ATV Tourism model.
- Quick checklist for communities to decide if they should embark on the process.
- Pre-feasibility assessment to determine if a reasonable case exists for a community to develop an ATV Tourism product. The assessment takes into account :
 - The market,
 - The community, and
 - Government compliance.
- A Business Plan for product development that includes component plans indicated in the exhibit below.

Business Plan Components



- A process for measurement and sustainability as well as quality control of the community-based ATV Tourism model.
- 26 Templates to be completed by the community, tourism suppliers, and other community partners.
- Several appendices that provide additional resource material.



List of Development Manual Templates

PRE-FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

- Template 1** **Community Partners**
A complete listing of who is and should be involved in the planning of the ATV Tourism Project
- Template 2** **Expectations**
A Vision Statement for the project with the recorded expectations of all of the interests involved from both a tourism and recreation perspective.
- Template 3** **Initial Market Estimation**
An initial estimation of the market that the community could reach based on a percentage of overnight outdoor visitors to the region, and ATV sales in the target market area.
- Template 4** **Trail Configuration Options**
A complete list of options for trail development based on configuration (loop, point-to-point, play area), use of the trail (shared, ATV only, winter use), relative market emphasis (experienced rider, novice, etc.) and targeted consumer segments.
- Template 5** **Community Strategic Plan**
A review of the Strategic Plan and tourism priorities for each of the communities (Municipalities and First Nations) that are involved in project planning.
- Template 6** **SWOT Analysis**
A traditional analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the project.
- Template 7** **Inventory of Services**
Identification of existing community tourism products that could be complementary to the ATV Tourism Product, and a full inventory of service providers that would be expected to support the product.
- Template 8** **Map of Trails Options**
A Map of the trail options developed in Template 4
- Template 9** **Organization Involvement**
A list of all previously identified interests (Template 1) involved in the project and their desired roles in planning, trail building, product management, and monitoring.
- Template 10** **Trail Planning Proposal Checklist**
A detailed trail planning checklist developed by the Sault Ste Marie office of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.
- Template 11** **Government Contacts**
A full list of government contacts for purposes of funding, environmental responsibility, public safety and protection, and all other purposes connected with the project.
- Template 12** **Trail Building Cost**
A first costing of the trail building expenses of each of the trail configuration options (Templates 4 and 8) relating to water crossings, signage, mapping etc. and likely sources of funding.
- Template 13** **Tourism Enterprise entity Operations Cost (Year 1)**
A first approximation of the operating revenues and costs of the Tourism Enterprise entity that will be responsible for managing the community trail system and the ATV Tourism Product.



BUSINESS PLAN

- Template 14** **Memorandum of Understanding**
A formal protocol to create an understanding between all of the interests that will be involved in the ATV Tourism Product development.
- Template 15** **Value-added Amenities**
A complete listing of all amenities that will enhance the ATV Tourism Product – Natural attractions, built attractions, guided outdoor experiences etc. together with indications of capacity and specific assets.
- Template 16** **Supplier Assessment**
A full assessment of all suppliers that will support the ATV Tourism Product in terms of available rooms, beds, restaurant seating capacities, amenities etc. Builds on Template 7.
- Template 17** **Market Readiness Checklist for Suppliers**
A Market Readiness Checklist for suppliers taken from the OTMP Guide to Building Successful Packages for Tourism.
- Template 18** **Supplier Targets**
To be used by individual suppliers in quantifying their expectations of business to be derived from the ATV Tourism Product, by year and by month.
- Template 19** **ATV Ontario – Package Description**
Initial package description for suppliers developed by the OTMP.
- Template 20** **Community Welcome Plan**
A checklist to ensure that all sectors of the community have the necessary information, and are prepared to support the ATV Tourism Product, as well as a plan of ongoing communications.
- Template 21** **Marketing Plan Checklist**
A simplified checklist of the key elements that need to be considered in developing a Product Marketing Plan, tailored to each specific market segment.
- Template 22** **Market Expenditure Tracking**
A template for tracking the effectiveness of marketing tools e.g. pamphlets, media advertising, website etc. To be completed post-season, and for each market area (origin of visitor) being tracked.
- Template 23** **5-Year Tourism Enterprise Entity Operations Pro-Forma**
A five-year operations pro-forma for the Tourism Enterprise entity aiming for a break-even operation by Year 3, with a sale of 2,500 trail passes.

MEASUREMENT AND QUALITY CONTROL

- Template 24** **Trail Maintenance Checklist**
A checklist to ensure that the trail is being properly maintained at regular intervals.
- Template 25** **Trail Reporting Form (Insurance Purposes)**
An example trail reporting form that will be used for insurance purposes, together with a list of individuals responsible for the trail and product.
- Template 26** **Accident Reporting Form**
A form to be used for the recording and reporting of trail accidents, and the actions to be taken to avoid similar situations in the future.