

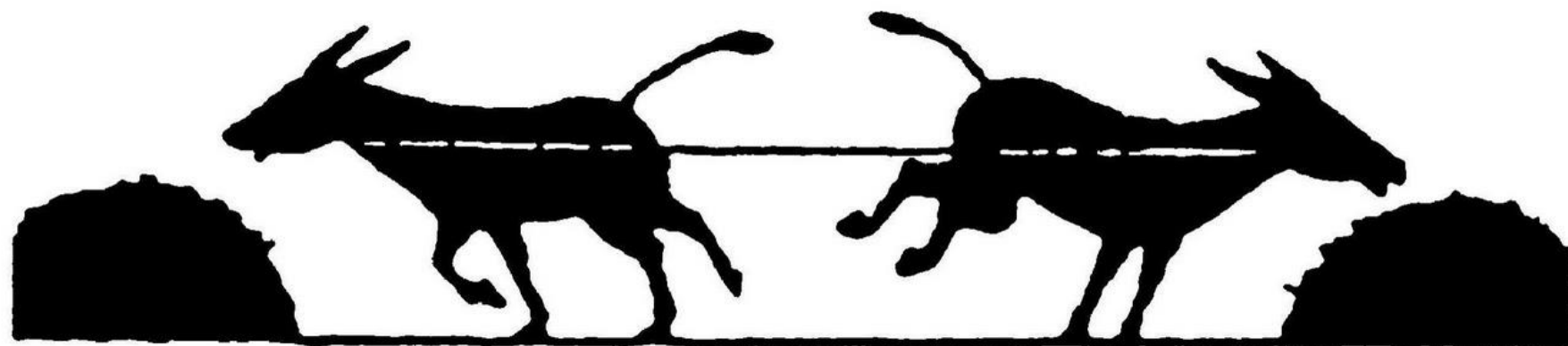
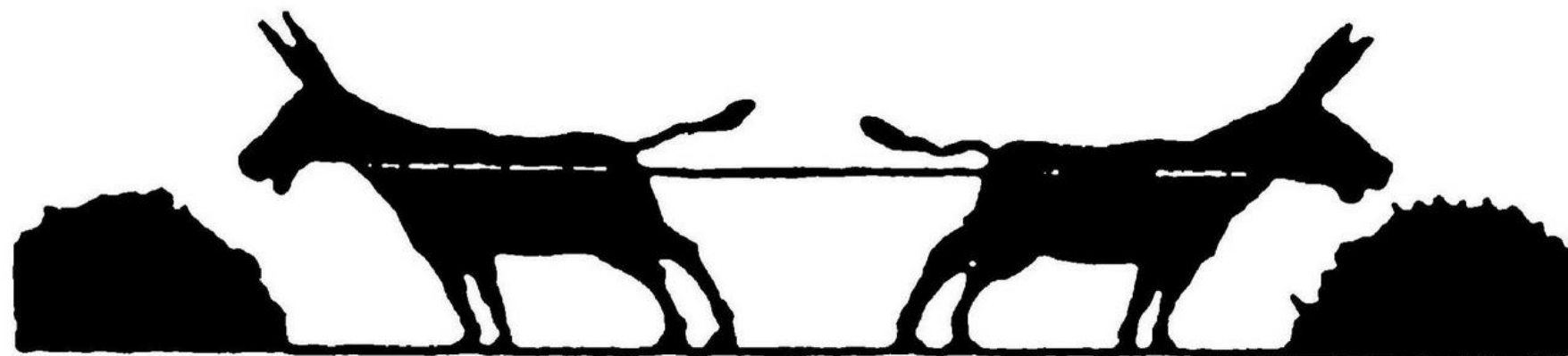
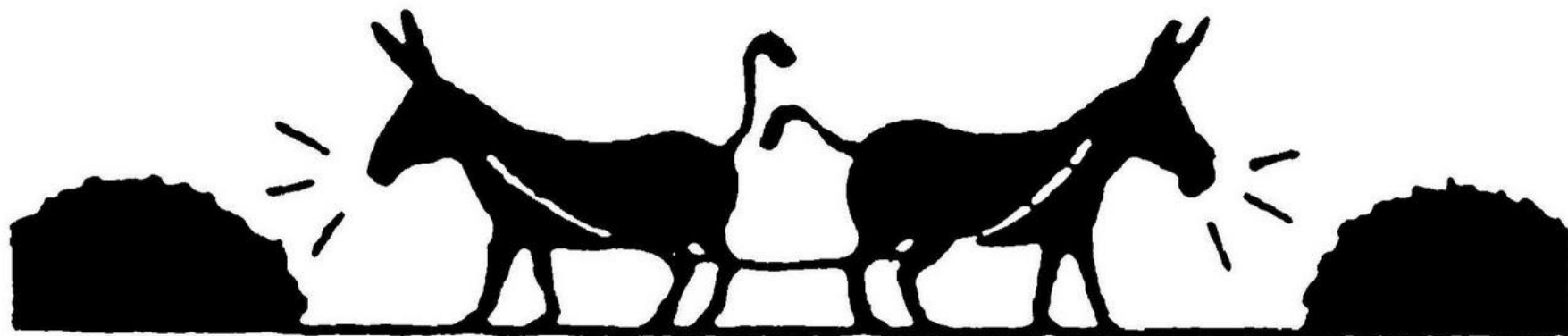
Managing Trail User Expectations

Jolene Rieck, PLA, Chief of Planning & Programs at NDPRD

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the different ways conflict can arise on a trail
- Identify the four classes of factors that produce conflict in outdoor recreation
- Learn about physical solutions to alleviate trail conflicts
- Learn about the management responses that will minimize trail conflicts







**The Know-
It-Alls**



**The
Passives**



**The
Dictators**



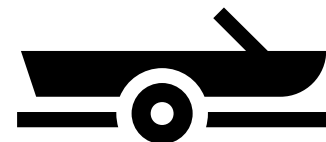
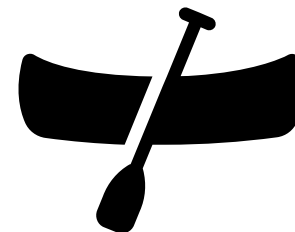
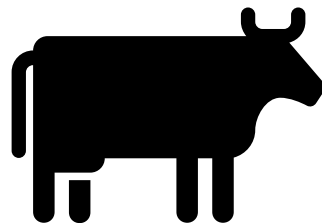
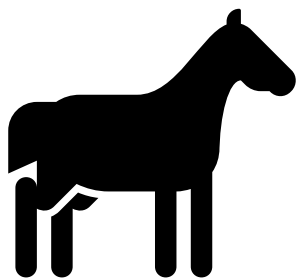
**The "Yes"
People**



**The "No"
People**

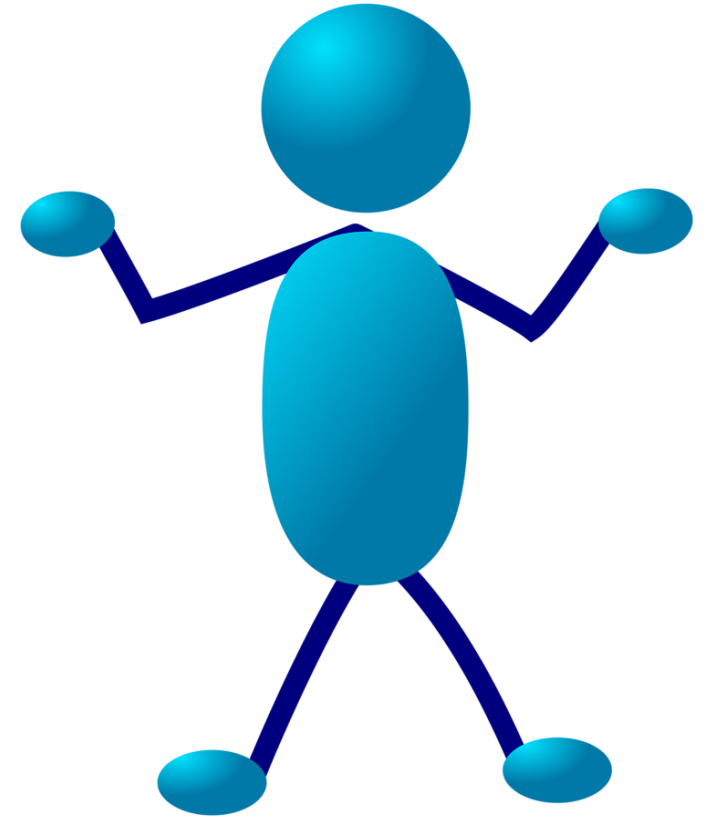


**The
Grippers**



Typical Trail Manager Goals

- Maintain user safety
- Protect natural resources
- Provide high quality user experiences





Threats to quality experiences

Crowding

- Number of encounters actual/preferred/expected
- Motivation for trail use (solitude vs social interaction)
- Behavior of others (regardless of number)
- Type of area (primitive vs urban)
- Location of contacts (favorite spot vs designated views)
- Size of groups
- User experience level
- Perceived environmental disturbance
- Obtrusiveness of visual impact
- Type of encounter

Philosophical Conflict

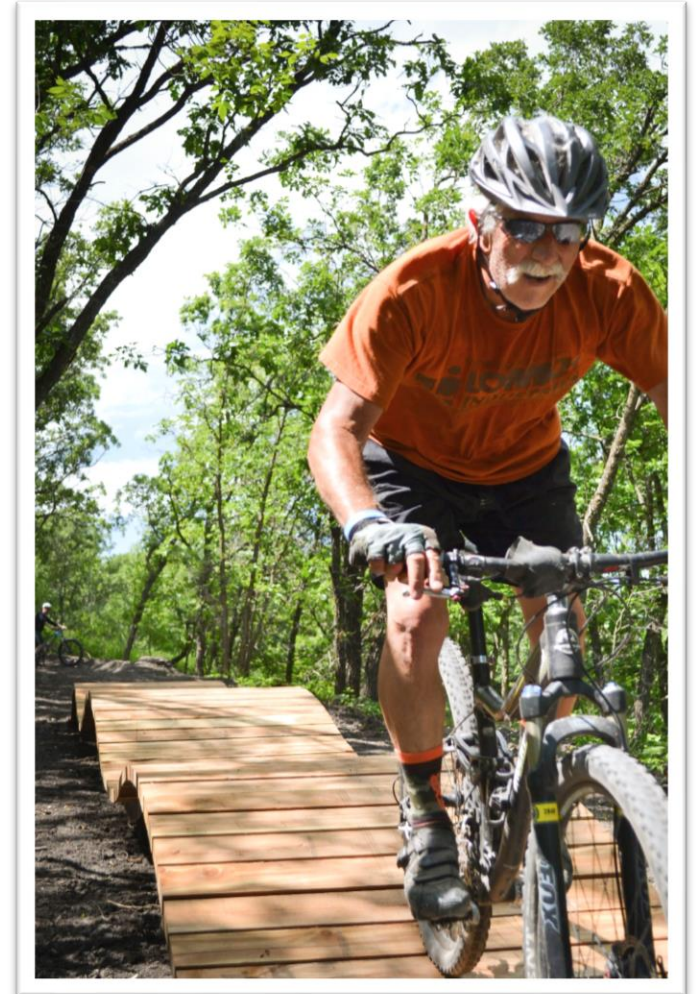
- **Activity Style:** Personal meanings attached to an activity.
 - “Specialization level”
- **Resource Specificity:** Significance attached to using a specific resource for a given recreation experience.
 - “Definition of place”
- **Mode of Experience:** How the natural environment will be perceived.
 - “Focus of trip/expectations”
- **Tolerance for Lifestyle Diversity:** The tendency to accept or reject lifestyles different from one’s own.
 - “Lifestyle tolerance”

Minimizing Conflicts on Trails



Physical Responses

- Proper trail design, layout and maintenance
- Use screening to prevent short-cutting of switchbacks versus signage
- Design speed: curve radii are based on design speed for wheeled equipment
- Benches: Identifying appropriate places to rest without blocking the trail
- Water diversion: eliminate water collection where possible



Adequate Trail Mileage | Least Physical Manipulation

Build more trails?

- Mileage in quantity may not be the solution.
- Diverse experiences within a same location.
- Crowding occurs the most at the trailhead. “First impression”
 - Separate trails for the first mile
 - Separate trailheads for different users

Purpose of the trail?

- Hard surface trails signify a more “built environment” or “urban” experience.
 - Higher level of service & expectations!
- Soft surface trails signal a more “natural” or “primitive” experience.
 - Lowers the expectations.

Paint a Centerline | Screening

Centerlines or Material Changes

- Paint or demark a centerline to separate two-way traffic.
 - Logs or posts can serve as a centerline
 - Berms can divide trails, too
- Design adequate sight distances
 - Can you see around the corner?
- Build trails wide enough
 - 4'-6" is the minimum distance for two people walking side by side

Use Nature to Your Advantage!

- Screen trails for:
 - Sight
 - Sound
 - Smells
- Use water to buffer and insulate
- Vegetation

Minimize Erosion

- Drain the surface & install drainage structures where needed.
- Avoid steep grades
- Full bench construction
- Follow the contour
- Stay out of highly erodible soils
- Use trail hardening techniques



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Design to Control Speed

- Vary the trail surface
- Vary the terrain
- Design to include frequent turns
- Add or leave barriers
 - Bumps
 - Curves
 - Waterbars
 - Drainage structures
- Single track sections go uphill/Roads go downhill



Support Facilities

- What is the number 1 question asked at a state park?
 - Where are the restrooms?????
- Corrals
- Concessions
- Programs
- Interpretative Signage
- Wayfinding
- Benches/Picnic Tables
- Waste Receptacles



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Maintenance Program

- Signs and markings
- Sight distance and clearance
- Surface repair
- Drainage
- Sweeping & clearing
- Structural deterioration
- Illumination
- Noxious weed control
- Trail closures & openings



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Management Responses

- **Information and Education**

- “Effective communication is the best way to prevent user dissatisfaction and conflict”
- Persuasive communication is not effective for illegal or unavoidable acts, but effective on uniformed acts
 - Trail etiquette
 - Trail ethics
 - Trail courtesy
 - Trail sharing

Persuasive Communication

- Applied Behavior Analysis
 - Addresses the behavior itself, not the beliefs around it
 - Short-term results
- Central Route to Persuasion
 - Changes behavior by changing the attitudes or beliefs
 - Strong, well-supported, clear and relevant messages tailored to particular audiences
- Peripheral Route to Persuasion
 - Infographics vs written word
 - Useful when users are attention-deficit or cluttered



Tips for Management Success

- Tailor your approach and content for your audience
- Place information a readily accessible and relevant place
- Provide information early in the decision-making process
- Present the information in an interesting way

12 Principles for Minimizing Conflicts

Roger Moore (1994)

1. Recognize conflicts as goal interference
2. Provide adequate trail opportunities
3. Minimize number of contacts in problem areas
4. Involve users as early as possible
5. Understand user needs
6. Identify the actual sources of conflicts



12 Principles for Minimizing Conflicts

Roger Moore (1994)

7. Work with affected users
8. Promote trail etiquette
9. Encourage positive interaction among different users
10. Favor light-handed management
11. Plan & act locally
12. Monitor progress



Discussion

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