



# Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR State Traffic Engineer	2-15-15
CHAPTER 2	Signing
SECTION 15	Comprehensive Guiding Policies
SUBJECT 15	Recreational Trail Signing

## A. Purpose

This policy provides guidance for the installation of guide signs to direct traffic to major access points for public recreational trails. This policy does not address “warning signs” that *may* apply to locations where the recreational trail crosses a highway.

## B. Definitions

Freeways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities that have full controlled access, by means of grade separation at interchanges only.

Expressways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities that have partial control of access and generally with grade separations at major intersections.

Conventional Highways are defined as either divided or undivided roadway facilities that have no control of access with grade separations at intersections. These highways can be two lane or multilane facilities.

## C. Policy

The following criteria **shall** apply for a trail to be eligible for signing on WisDOT maintained roadways:

1. Public recreational trails owned and/or managed by the state government **shall** be the only trails that qualify for signing on freeways.
2. Public recreational trails owned and/or managed by the state or county government, or by a multi-state agency or commission **shall** be the only trails that qualify for signing on expressways.

3. Public recreational trails owned and/or managed by the state or county government, by a multi-state agency or commission, or by a city, village, or township *may* be signed for on conventional highways.
4. All trailblazing signing off the State Trunk Highway system **shall** be in place prior to the installation of any signs on the State Trunk Highway system.
5. The trail **shall** be constructed and maintained to Wisconsin DNR standards, with an improved surface of compacted aggregate or better and be open year round. National Trails, as established by Congress, on the National Trails System with a natural surface *may* qualify for signing, provided the access points to be signed meet all other applicable criteria, including off-street parking facilities.
6. Evidence of poor trail maintenance or inadequate or poor trailblazing signage will be cause to remove any existing signs from the State Trunk Highway system.
7. The message on the signs *should* read "XX State Trail" for state owned trails and "XX Trail" for county, regional, city, village or township trails. The signs **shall** be composed of white lettering on a brown background.
8. For all roadways, only the trail termini will be signed. Intermediate access points *may* qualify for signing. The intermediate access points **shall** be spaced a minimum of 15 miles. A maximum of 2 signs **shall** be installed, one in each direction of travel, for each trail access point to be signed. For freeways and expressways, a directional sign (D1 sign) **shall** be placed on the freeway/expressway ramp to lead to the trail access.
9. Trail termini and intermediate access points *should* have the following amenities:
  - a. Public restrooms or toilets on freeways and expressways, but are optional on conventional highways
  - b. Public, off-street paved or gravel parking facilities
  - c. Trail information
10. Where trail access points from two different trails have the same point of access from the State Trunk Highway, both trail names **shall** be identified on the same sign.
11. These signs **shall** be placed at the closest State Trunk Highway intersections to the trail termini. Trailblazing signing from a conventional State Trunk Highway to another conventional State Trunk Highway will not be allowed.
12. For freeways, expressways, and conventional highways, trail access points **shall** be no more than 5 miles from the nearest exit or State Trunk Highway.
13. The cost for fabrication, installation, and maintenance of any recreational trail signing **shall** be the responsibility of the trail owner or managing organization or agency.

WisDOT **shall** coordinate the fabrication, installation, and maintenance of all signs on State Trunk Highways, including ramps, and **shall** be reimbursed for all costs. Installation of signs *may* be performed by WisDOT forces or by permit/letter.