

# Recreational Trails in Whitestone

## *Why Develop Trails?*

The Municipality of Whitestone is characterized by large tracts of undeveloped land, interspersed with freshwater lakes, rivers and wetlands. 80% of the land area in Whitestone is Crown land. Under Ontario's *Public Lands Act*, these lands are accessible to all residents of Ontario, however, any trails that exist on these lands cannot be managed, maintained or promoted by the Municipality without the authorization of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

*An organized recreational trail system is a desirable amenity that contributes to the economic and social vitality of the community.*

## Economic Benefits

A well-designed and developed trail system can **attract visitors** to the Municipality, which provides opportunities for new businesses to supply accommodation, food and recreation-oriented services. Trails also improve the overall appeal of a community to visitors and to home buyers. Trails are considered a **lifestyle enhancement** and are often used by realtors to attract buyers and **sell property**.

## Social Benefits

Trails act as a meeting place for the community. Trails foster **community involvement**, and corresponding pride, in addition to providing an opportunity to interact with people of varying backgrounds and experiences. A well-designed trail system will direct users away from areas of concern such as environmentally sensitive areas and private property. The trail system can serve to educate and inform users of the area's **heritage, natural environment** and **local traditions**.

Trails are accessible to all income groups. Common trail activities like walking, cycling and cross-country skiing are relatively inexpensive, unorganized activities, providing **accessible recreation** opportunities.

## Health Benefits

Improved walking facilities, such as trails, support an active lifestyle that improves health. Greater participation in physical activity is an effective way of achieving **physical and emotional health** and reducing escalating health care costs.

Frightening statistics on the rising rates of **childhood obesity** make a compelling case for the need to expand opportunities for affordable, accessible and unscheduled physical activity.



**Unmanaged Trail in Whitestone**