



SPORT  
IRELAND  
TRAILS

Supporting Outdoor Recreation in Ireland

# Recreational Trails Education and Training- Programme Guide



[www.irishtrails.ie](http://www.irishtrails.ie)



## Foreword

I am very pleased to present the Sport Ireland Trails Education and Training Programme.

Sport Ireland has supported this sector over the past fifteen years by promoting standards and good practice, managing trail quality assurance and maintaining a national trails register. It is very encouraging to see how trails have developed in Ireland over the past 10 years and this should be a source of great pride for all communities and organisations involved.



Recreational trails provide a wide variety of ways for people to be active in the outdoors. The broad range of benefits that accrue from trails and outdoor exercise such as walking, cycling and water based activities are well documented.

It is clear that the development of quality infrastructure makes a large contribution to getting more people active in the outdoors. Recreational trails are also a significant offering for visitors to our country and serve as an important amenity and asset in many rural communities.

The new education and training programme serves as a further development of our work and seeks to fill a gap that currently exists in the provision of high quality training courses for people working in this area. I hope all who attend the courses will find them rewarding. I would encourage all agencies to support the programme and continue to develop high quality trails for people to enjoy Ireland's beautiful outdoor environment.

John Treacy, CEO Sport Ireland







## Introduction

We are delighted to introduce the Sport Ireland Education and Training Programme which currently offers a suite of seven short courses all aimed at assisting organisations involved in the planning and development of recreational trails in Ireland.

The initial courses offered in this programme are all short day and two day courses offering a mix of classroom learning, practical group work and outdoor learning modules. All courses are delivered by an experienced and certified panel of tutors.



Our Walking Trail Planning and Walking Trail Development courses are intended for those wishing to develop walking trails for the first time.

Our Recreational Cycling Route Planning and Development Course is a two day offering that offers a comprehensive overview on all matters that must be considered when planning high quality cycling routes. Our Introduction to Walking Trail Construction Techniques and Practical Trail Surface Construction and Repair Courses are both aimed at addressing the key area of trail surface sustainability and how this may be improved and enhanced on lowland walking trails.

Our Walking Trail Survey, Design and Specification is aimed at people looking to develop skills in the area of trail design and specification and our Local Trail Monitoring and Maintenance Planning Course is aimed at all organisations involved in the ongoing management of trails providing guidance on how to establish a regular trail monitoring routine and plan maintenance activity.

Courses are offered in a number of venues around the country and can also be run in other locations if requested and suitable. Sport Ireland Trails can also offer bespoke training courses for organisations which may be individually tailored to company and participants needs.

In the long term it is our hope that this Education and Training Programme will empower agencies and communities to develop and manage high quality trails and outdoor recreation infrastructure across Ireland and this in turn will lead to more people using trails and being active in the outdoors.

We encourage all agencies to support the programme by encouraging staff to attend courses, by providing feedback on courses and giving ideas for new training courses you think may be needed to support your work.

**Cormac Mac Donnell,**  
Manager, Sport Ireland Trails







"I completed the one day course on Walking Trail Planning, a really well put together and well-presented course. It was extremely informative and took us through the trail planning process in a very structured, logical fashion. All of the content was presented in a very engaging manner as well and the practical session after lunch really worked."

John Brunnock Trails Officer  
Waterford City & County Council

"I completed the two day course on Recreational Cycle Route Planning & Development. It was a thoroughly informative and enjoyable course with a great mix of lecturing (that generated lots of discussion), group work and fieldwork, not to mention networking with like-minded people which allowed for a high level of knowledge sharing."

Frank Burke Cycling Officer,  
Wexford County Council



# Course Profiles

## Walking Trail Planning



Day Course covering all issues that need to be considered when planning a new walking trail

**This one day course provides a comprehensive overview of all the issues that need to be considered when planning a walking trail in Ireland.**

**The topics covered on this course include:**

- Overview of Walking Trails in Ireland and Agencies involved
- Considerations in Trail Planning
- Trail Planning Process
- Viability & Sustainability of Trails
- Route Choice
- Partnerships – Who to Involve
- Access, Insurance & Liability
- Case Study & Site Visit
- Trail Planning Template

**The course is suitable for anybody with an interest in trails and the outdoors but will be of particular interest to:**

- Local group members involved in developing walking trails
- Staff with a trails brief in local authorities or national bodies
- Rural Recreation Officers/County Trails Officers
- People approving or funding trails projects
- Trail managers looking to upgrade or expand their route
- Professionals who want to understand trails development

## Walking Trail Development



Day Course covering all issues that need to be considered when developing a new walking trail

**This course covers the topics that need to be considered when guiding a trail from planning to the development stage including:**

- Trail Development in Ireland Overview
- Walking Trail Surfaces & Infrastructure
- Detailed Route Choice
- Case Study & Site Visit
- Estimating Costs
- Funding & Resources
- Future Trail Management Considerations
- Completing a Trail Proposal

**The course is suitable for anybody with an interest in trails and the outdoors but will be of particular interest to:**

- Local group members involved in developing walking trails
- Staff with a trails brief in local authorities or national bodies
- Rural Recreation Officers/County Trails Officers
- People approving or funding trails projects
- Trail managers looking to upgrade or expand their route
- Professionals who want to understand trails development

# Course Profiles

## Introduction to Walking Trail Survey, Design and Specification



Day Course focusing on the processes and techniques which can be applied to trail specifications for new trails or sections of existing trails

**This one day course introduces the process and techniques used when conducting a trail survey or specification including:**

- Trails Survey methods
- Trail design principles
- Putting it all together – design and specification
- Identifying costs

**This course will be of particular interest to**

- CE Schemes, RSS and Tus supervisors and staff
- Local Authority staff
- Forestry staff
- Trail management committee members
- Volunteers and other persons likely to be working on trail maintenance

## Introduction to Walking Trail Construction Techniques



Day Course covering the essential knowledge needed to construct and maintain trails

**This day course is focused on the theoretical knowledge that underpins trail construction and maintenance.**

**The topics covered include:**

- What is trail surface 'damage' and why does it happen?
- Types of trail surface
- Soils and trails
- Water impacts and management
- Trail building principles, materials and techniques
- Trail surface monitoring & maintenance planning

**This course will be of particular interest to:**

- CE Schemes, RSS and Tus supervisors and staff
- Local Authority staff
- Forestry staff
- Trail management committee members
- Volunteers and other persons likely to be working on trail maintenance

# Course Profiles

## Practical Trail Surface Construction and Repair



Day course with a strong practical focus covering the most common trail construction techniques

**This one day course provides a thorough overview of the skills and knowledge needed to undertake practical trail construction and maintenance works.**

**The topics covered on this course include:**

- Site and Hazard Awareness
- Basic Path Building Techniques
- Construction of timber and stone water bars and drains
- Step construction using timber and stone
- Building bog-bridges
- Use of Ecogrid/cellular surfacing

**The course is suitable for anybody with an interest in trails and the outdoors but will be of particular interest to:**

- CE schemes, RSS and Tus supervisors and staff
- Local Authority staff
- Forestry staff
- Trail management committee members
- Volunteers and other persons likely to be working on trail maintenance

## Local Trail Monitoring and Maintenance Planning



Day Course focusing on the operation of an effective monitoring and maintenance programme

**This one day course provides a comprehensive overview of what a trail monitoring and maintenance programme entails.**

**The topics covered on this course include:**

- Responsible Trail Management, Maintenance & Monitoring
- Common Issues on Walking Trails
- Local Trail Monitoring- Procedures, Skills & Templates
- Safety Issues & Risk Assessment
- Case Study & Site Visit
- Trail Maintenance Planning – Prioritising Issues, Generating Work plans
- Record Keeping

**The course is suitable for anybody with an interest in trails and the outdoors but will be of particular interest to:**

- CE Schemes, RSS, Tus supervisors and staff
- Local Authority staff
- Forestry staff
- Trail management committee members
- Volunteers and other persons likely to be working on trail maintenance

# Course Profiles

## Recreational Cycle Route Planning and Development



2 day course covering considerations when planning and developing a cycling route

**This 2 day course will provide participants with the knowledge and skills to aid the planning and development of recreational cycle routes in Ireland.**

**The topics covered include:**

- National & local policy for cycling infrastructure provision
- Technical guidance/standards
- International context & trends for cycle route development
- The different types and needs of cyclists (and bicycles/cycles)
- What is a good quality recreational cycling trail?
- Key issues and considerations for planning cycling routes on-road and traffic free
- The process for cycle route planning and development
- Estimating the costs for planning, developing and maintaining a recreational cycling route

**The course is suitable for individuals working in the recreation/tourism/transport/cycling area but will be of particular interest to:**

- Those involved with and/or are responsible for planning and developing cycle routes
- Those involved in funding or approving cycle route projects
- Staff within Local Authorities (including Cycling Officers) and other state agencies with a role related to cycling
- Rural/Community Development representatives

## Bespoke Training Courses

Courses delivered specifically for your learning needs with a focus on local challenges

Sport Ireland Trails have developed and delivered in-house training for numerous organisations in recent years and this remains a key part of our Education and Training Programme. Courses can be tailored to meet the learning needs of organisations and participants and can be delivered locally.

**Get in touch with us on [trailstraining@sportireland.ie](mailto:trailstraining@sportireland.ie) to find out more.**





Our Programme  
Management and Delivery  
Team are all QQI Certified

## Programme Delivery Team

We have assembled an experienced panel of trainers to deliver our courses. They all have extensive experience and expertise in their areas in both an Irish and International context.



### Darragh O' Sullivan

Darragh is a highly experienced outdoor recreation consultant with a particular expertise in walking trails. Darragh has worked with numerous clients in developing and delivering solutions on various trails projects.



### Doug Corrie

Doug has extensive experience in recreational cycling and is the National Coordinator for the Eurovelo project in Ireland as well as being responsible for cycle route assessments for Sport Ireland Trails. Doug has also been on the organising committee for the Great Dublin Bike Ride for the past two years which is one of the highlights of the cycling calendar.



### Jeremy Smith

Jeremy has extensive experience in the use, management and development of recreational trails for walking and cycling. He has a particular interest in developing sustainable trail networks through the application of appropriate construction and maintenance methods.



### Martin Ruane

Martin worked as a forest manager for Coillte before transferring to the recreation team in 2008. Over the years he has gained extensive experience in all aspects of trail design, mapping, specification, construction and trail maintenance and has previously delivered a trail maintenance course. He is also trained in first aid, manual handling, hazard identification/risk assessment, Environmental impact assessment and Leave No Trace.



### Damien Ó Tuama

Dr. Damien Ó Tuama is the National Cycling Coordinator with Cyclist.ie – the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network ([www.cyclist.ie](http://www.cyclist.ie)) and An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland ([www.antaisce.org](http://www.antaisce.org)). He is also the Vice-President of the European Cyclists' Federation ([www.ecf.com](http://www.ecf.com)). His main research interests in the mobilities sphere include the processes of transition of mobility systems, the 'ripple effects' of introducing urban bike-sharing schemes and all aspects of cycling policy.

Martin has worked extensively with local authorities and other bodies over the years in managing and delivering recreation infrastructure projects and is a keen mountaineer, having climbed Kilimanjaro, Mt Blanc, Atlas, and Everest base camp over the last few years.

## Programme Management Team



### Cian Spillane Programme Coordinator

Cian is responsible for the planning and coordination of the Education and Training Programme and is responsible for the implementation of Sport Ireland Trails Quality Assurance Procedures. Cian enjoys being outdoors and is a keen runner and cyclist.



### Cormac MacDonnell Programme Manager

Cormac has been working in the area of trails and outdoor recreation with Sport Ireland and the Irish Sport Council for over 15 years. He has served as secretary to the National Trails Advisory Committee over this time and represented Sport Ireland on the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Network and Comhairle na Tuaithe over the past 10 years. Cormac has served as a board member of Leave No Trace Ireland and Eco Tourism Ireland and is active in a range of outdoor recreation sports including trail running, cycling and mountaineering.

# Programme Delivery Venues



## **Farran Forest Park Co. Cork**

The classroom sessions will be hosted in the National Rowing Centre with the practical elements taking place on the Coillte trails on-site. Farran Forest Park is located in Ovens, Co. Cork.



## **National Sports Campus Blanchardstown Dublin 15**

The classroom sessions will be conducted in Sport HQ with the practical elements of the cycling course taking place at the nearby Royal Canal Greenway. The Sport Ireland National Sports Campus is situated in Abbotstown.



## **Lough Key Forest Park, Co. Roscommon**

The classroom sessions will be hosted in the Visitor Centre with the practical elements taking place on the Coillte trails on-site. Lough Key Forest Park is located near Boyle Co. Roscommon.



## **Mullingar Co. Westmeath**

The Recreational Cycle Route Planning & Development course will be held in Mullingar. The central location of Mullingar coupled with the close proximity of the Old Rail Trail cycle route makes it an ideal location for hosting the course.

Sport Ireland Trails are also happy to offer courses to individual organisations in-house. Please contact [trailstraining@sportireland.ie](mailto:trailstraining@sportireland.ie) for further information.

To view the current course calendar go to [www.irishtrails.ie/education\\_training](http://www.irishtrails.ie/education_training)









## Contact Us

Sport Ireland Trails  
Top Floor Block A  
West End Office Park  
Dublin D15KPW7  
01 8608800  
[www.irishtrails.ie](http://www.irishtrails.ie)  
[trailstraining@sportireland.ie](mailto:trailstraining@sportireland.ie)