

R1 Trails Project Preparation

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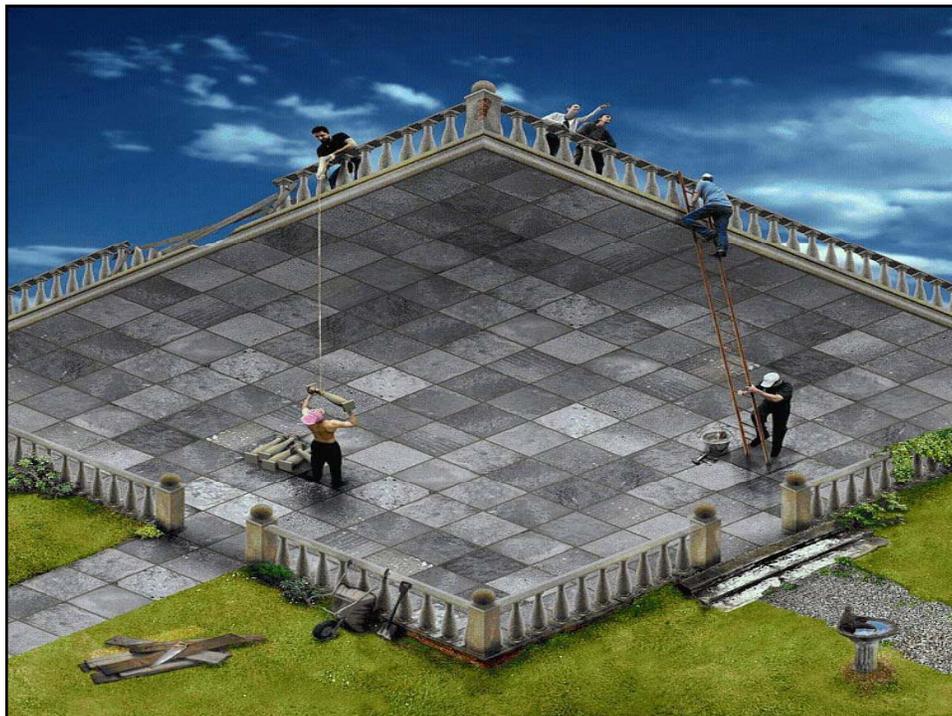
# Module Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- ✓ Demonstrate familiarity with the trail planning flowchart
- ✓ Learn to plan trails that meet the expectations of users and that protect resources, while meeting agency and law requirements

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# Trail Planning

- ✓ How do we get from the current situation to a trail that meets our desired condition?
- ✓ Advice from the Route and Area Designation Guide:
  - ✓ Avoid unnecessary environmental analysis
  - ✓ Focus on the change from the status quo
  - ✓ Collaborate

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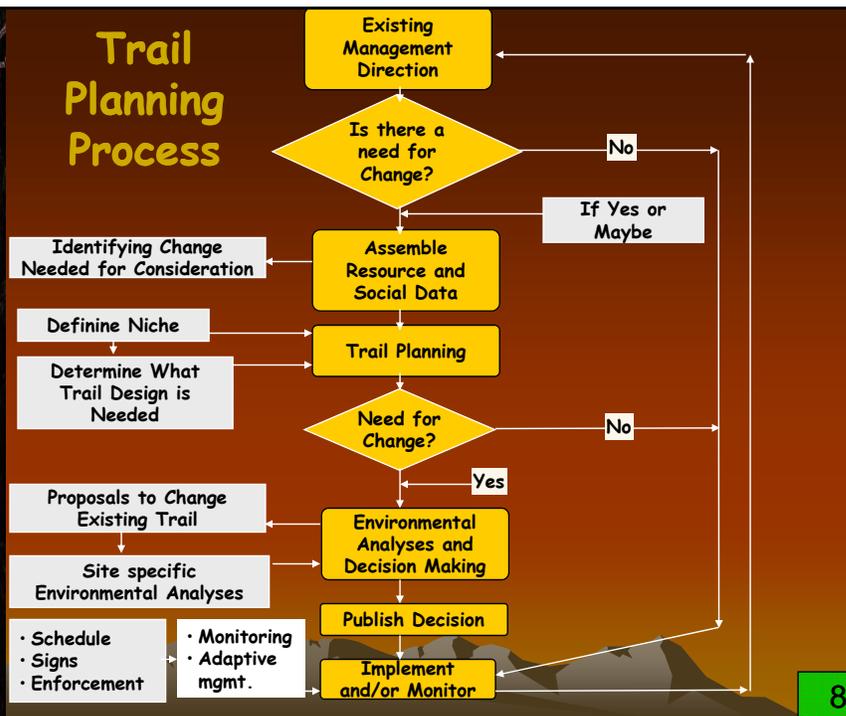
# Steps in Project Preparation

- ✓ Ideally, the full trail planning process should take 5 years
- ✓ 3 years is more realistic and should be considered the minimum
- ✓ Trail planning involves lots of folks
- ✓ Trail planning should be the same for either contract or force account

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## Trail Planning Process



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## First Goal for First Year of Planning: Compile Existing Management Direction

Collect all management direction for the trail. Obtain information from:

- ✓ Laws, Management Strategies, Guidance
- ✓ Management plans, city general plans activity plans, travel management plans, transportation plans, masterplans, recreation area management Plans

continued...

- ✓ Existing Facilities
- ✓ Set Trail Management Objective (TMO) if not set by this time
- ✓ Project plans, design guidelines, trail standards
- ✓ Does your agency own the land or have an easement, is there broken land ownership you would have to deal with?

...And, most important!!!

- ✓ Is there a need for change?



## Second Goal for First Year of Planning: Assemble Resource and Social Data

- ✓ Understand desired user experiences (needs) now and in the future
- ✓ Determine Landscape Characteristics
- ✓ Determine Social Characteristics
- ✓ Field recon with appropriate folks such as archeologist, biologists, etc
- ✓ Is there a need for change?

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## Inventory and Assessment of Relevant Resources



- ✓ Literature search – what information is out there regarding the trail?
- ✓ Resource information from Management Plans
- ✓ ROS
- ✓ Visual Resource Classifications

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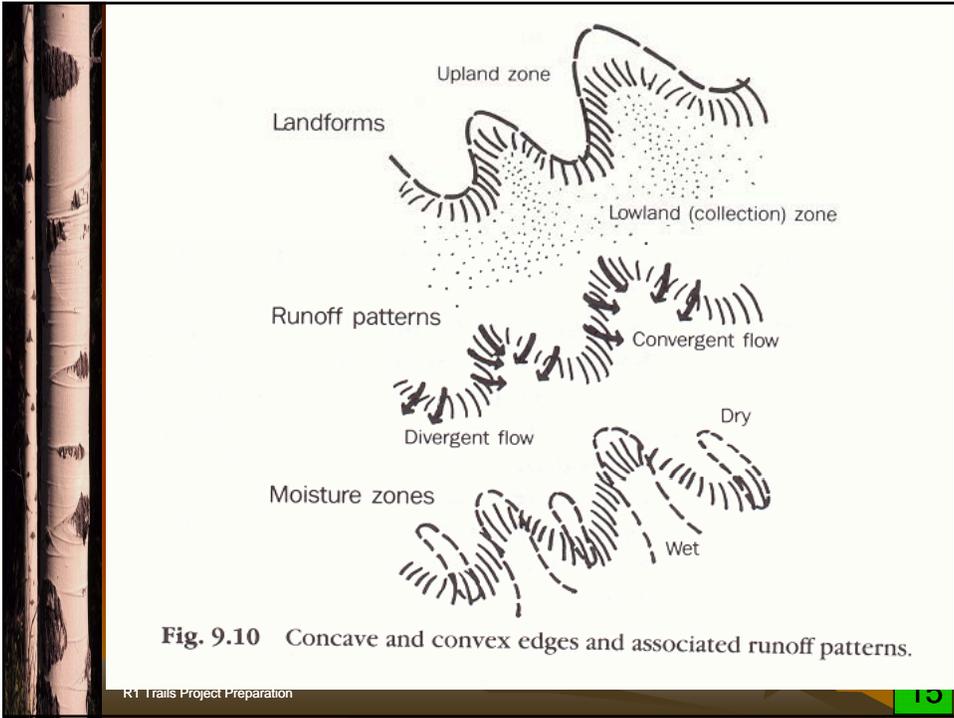
As you assemble resource data, complete an inventory and assessment of relevant resources which should consist of:

- ✓ Existing conditions of soil, water flow, vegetation, wildlife, cultural resources, caves, etc.
- ✓ GIS data for trail



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# View-shed



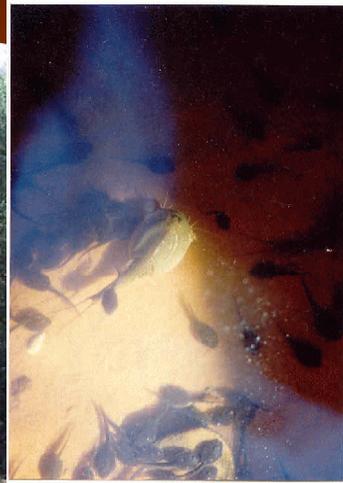
## FRAGILE SOILS AND ENDANGERED PLANTS



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# RIPARIAN ZONES AND ENDANGERED FISH HABITAT



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# Wildlife Habitat and Threatened Species



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# PRE-HISTORIC ARTIFACTS

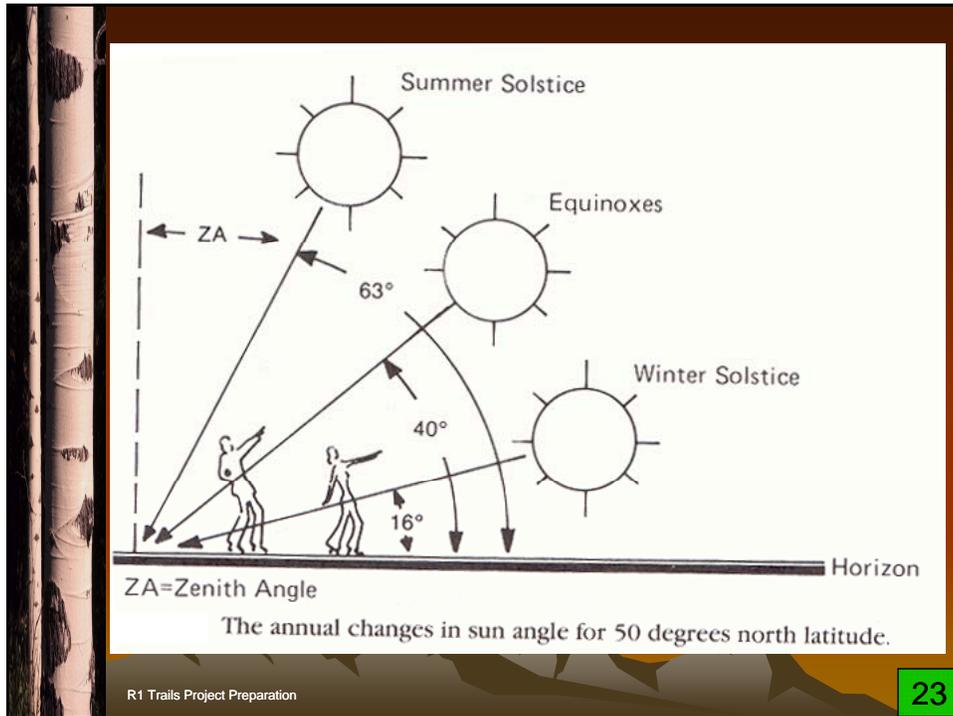


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# Unique Features





## Inventory and Assessment of Social Characteristics

- ✓ Complete a resource inventory and assessment for social characteristics:
  - ✓ Physical condition of any existing trails
  - ✓ Other local recreation opportunities including facilities for services such as fuel and food

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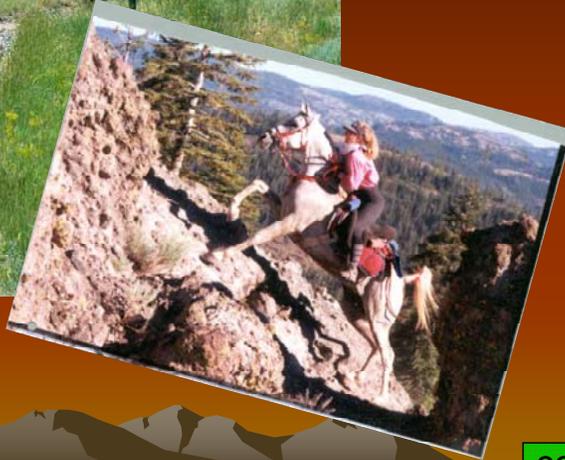
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- ✓ Is the trail providing the desired experience?
- ✓ Safety concerns
- ✓ Accessibility considerations
- ✓ Identify the area niche
- ✓ Identify the demographics of users
- ✓ Meet with interest groups to obtain current social situation
- ✓ Determine current and future user trends

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**Keeping the ROS in balance**

The diagram illustrates the balance of the ROS (Recreation Opportunity Spectrum) through three interconnected settings:

- Physical Setting:** A vertical axis ranging from *Pristine* (top) to *Developed* (bottom).
- Social Setting:** A vertical axis ranging from *Solitude* (top) to *Crowded* (bottom).
- Managerial Setting:** A vertical axis ranging from *Regulated* (top) to *Unregulated* (bottom).

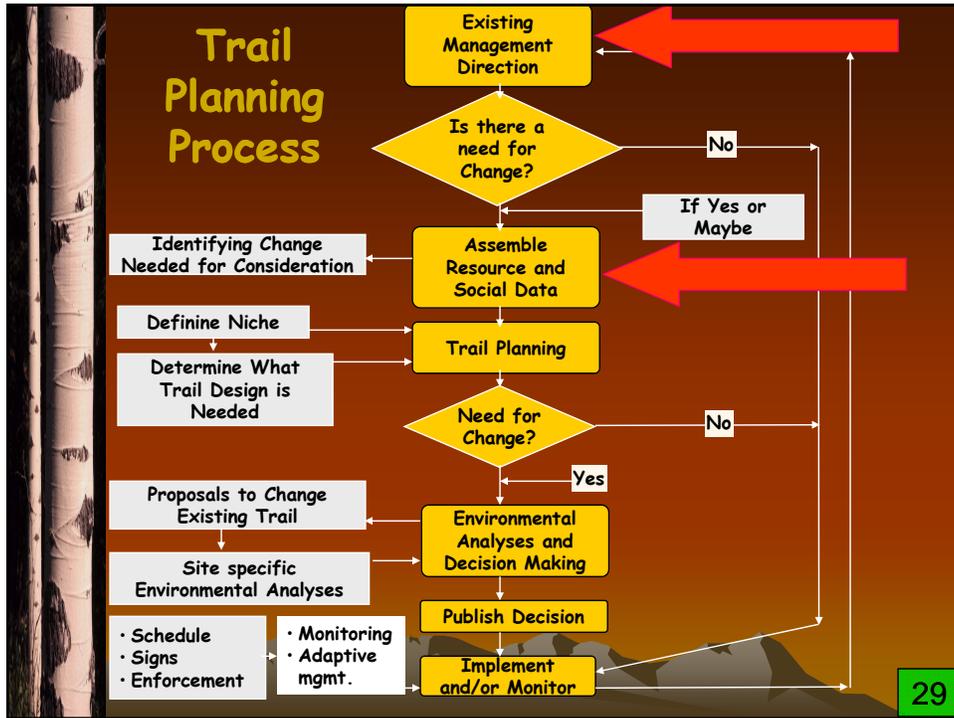
A central seesaw is tilted towards the *Developed*, *Crowded*, and *Unregulated* ends. The seesaw is supported by a fulcrum. The background features a stylized mountain range and a birch tree trunk on the left. The number 22 is located in the bottom right corner of the diagram area.

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Two photographs illustrating different trail types:

- The top photograph shows a wooden boardwalk trail winding through a lush green forest.
- The bottom photograph shows a paved path curving through a park-like setting with trees and grass.

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# Begin The Process!

- ✓ Decide on the planning process you will use and the framework the plan will use
- ✓ Gather agency personnel, specialists, customers and interest groups together under a collaborative process to determine options

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## Identify the issues

- ✓ Specifically identify the problem(s) or need(s) that are to be solved or addressed through this planning effort.
- ✓ What kind of trail is appropriate?
- ✓ What will the trail management objective and trail classification be?

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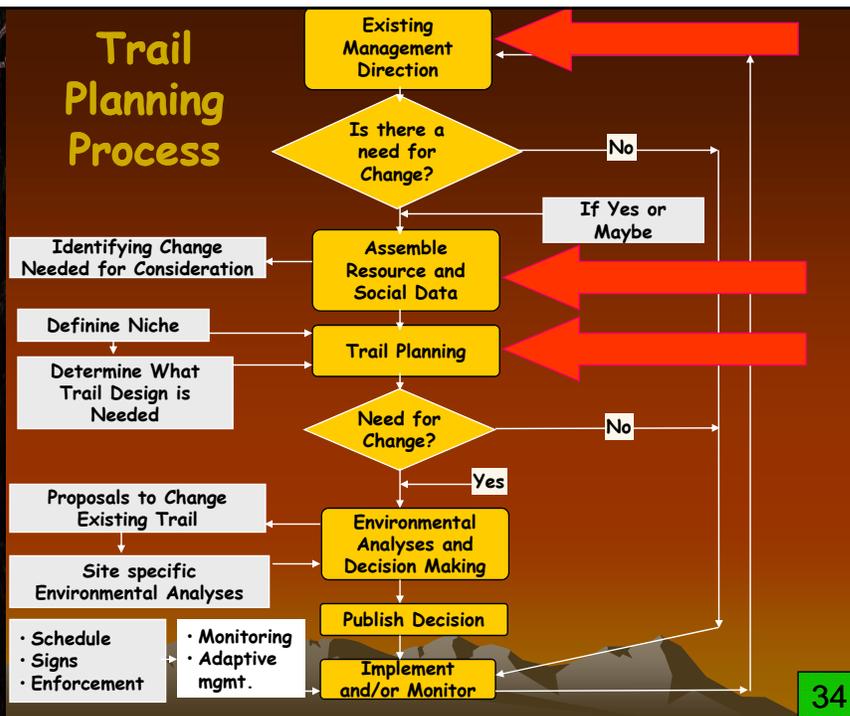
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# Consider Management of the Trail Following Project Completion



✓ Current Staffing  
- what are the available human resources to implement the plan upon completion?

## Trail Planning Process



# Developing Alternatives for A Project

- ✓ Use all data collected in your resource and social assessment
- ✓ Consider legal side boards or decision space determined from your compilation of management direction, resource data and social data collected
- ✓ Involve all user and interest groups in alternative development and communicate decision space and sideboards
- ✓ Collaborate to obtain consensus

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## Determine Preliminary Scope of the Project

- ✓ Beginning and end of project
- ✓ Broad work goals, sufficient to estimate funding needs
- ✓ Line Officer or Administrator buy-off
- ✓ Schedule year for work to begin

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## End of Year 1

- ✓ Preliminary scope approved by Line Officer or Administrator
- ✓ Enter project into funding stream
  - ✓ Project funding
  - ✓ Partnerships
  - ✓ Grants
  - ✓ Volunteer programs



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## Montana Conservation Corps



## Goals for Second Year

- ✓ Complete public involvement
- ✓ Get clearances from specialists
- ✓ Complete NEPA documents and issue decision
- ✓ Anything else that helps to set the final scope of project



## Goal for Third Year

- ✓ Complete final field survey and design
- ✓ Complete any permitting such as streamside permits or material removal permits
- ✓ Put contract needs into advanced acquisition plan or...
- ✓ Program force account work, determine needs

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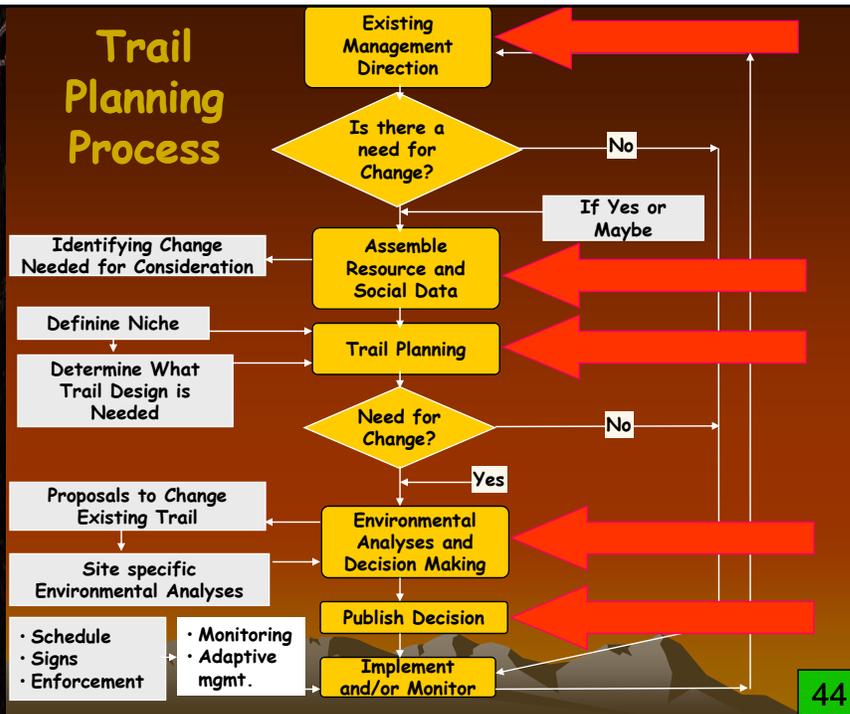
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# End of Third Year

- ✓ Get trail maintenance, construction or reconstruction package approvals from line officer
- ✓ Make preparations for project work
- ✓ Shelve project if not funded

# Trail Planning Process

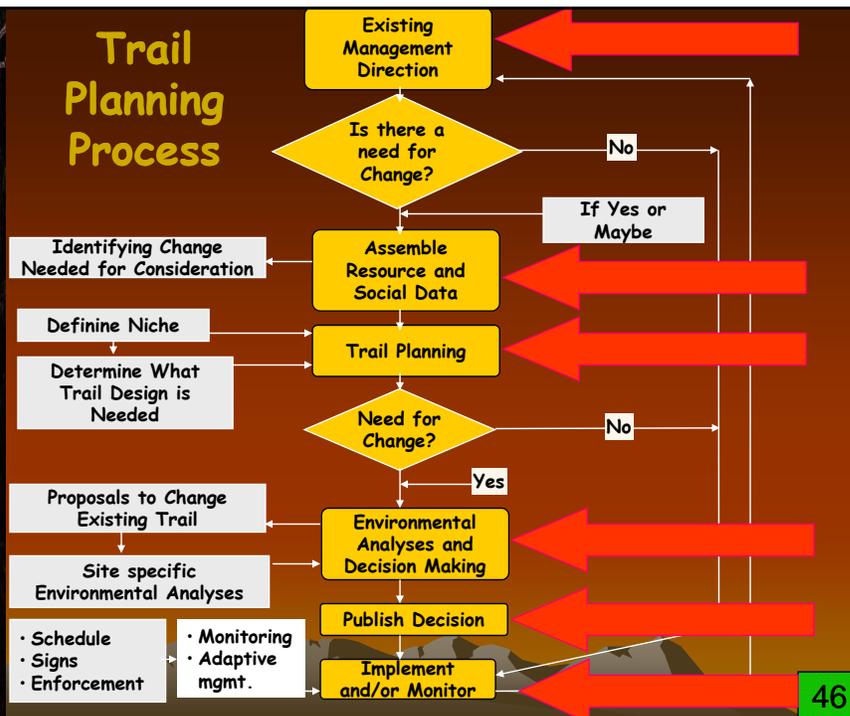


# Last Step, Year 3+: Build Your Trail or Establish Your Trail System Designations



Be sure to continue To monitor the impacts to your trail and to see if it is still meeting the users needs

## Trail Planning Process



**For More Information on TMOs and other Trail  
planning issues go to:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/measures/TR.htm>**

