



<https://tinyurl.com/5n99du79>

Contact: TakeAhike@EmpoweringAccess.com

Disability Outdoors

Best Management Practices
for Accessibility & Inclusion



Ashley Schahfer (she/her)

+ Sam the ham dog

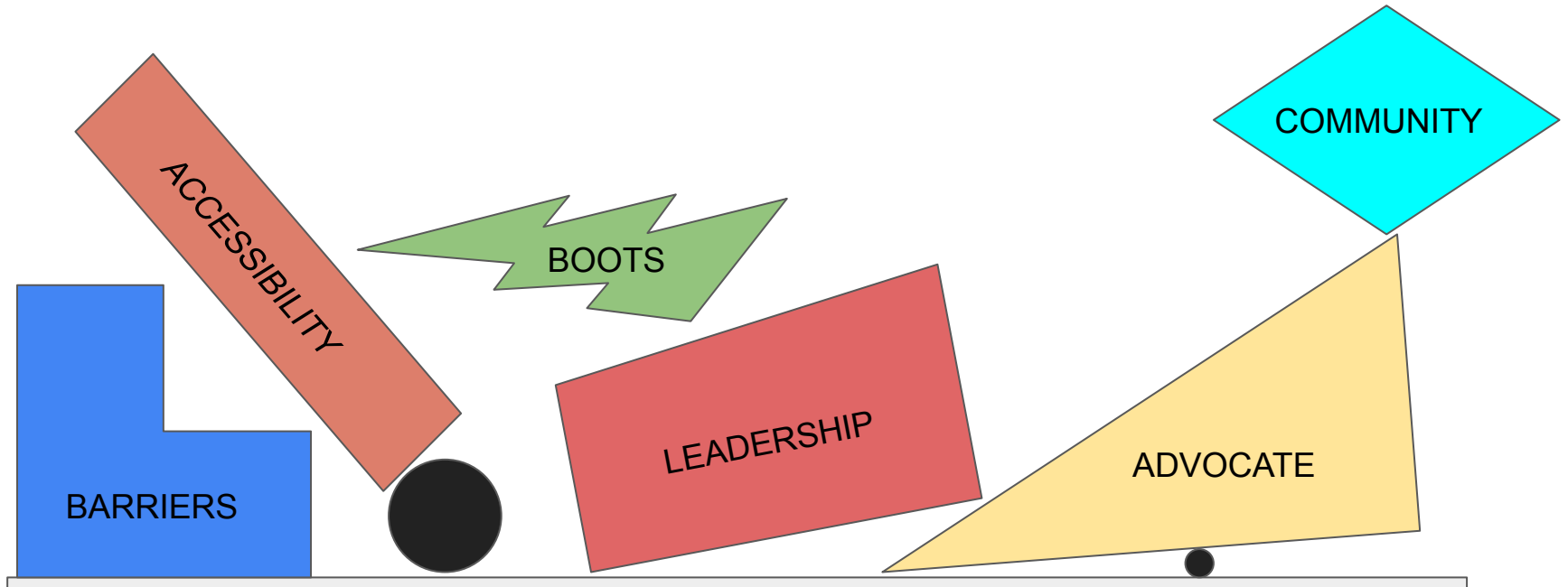
Contact: TakeAhike@EmpoweringAccess.com

- BS & M.Arch in Architecture, Women's Studies Certificate
- Adjunct Professor at PSU School of Architecture
- Owner, Empowering Access - Disability Equity & Inclusion Consulting
- 22+ years with lived experience
- Training facilitator with Allyship in action
- Have served on many committees!
- I enjoy outdoor activities from skiing, aMTB, camping, climbing, paddling, to burning man



Who's in the room?

What does accessibility mean to you?



Understanding Disability

Disability is not a negative term. It is important to dispel the belief that having a disability is a “problem” that lies within the disability. My disability only exists when the environment or social construct creates a barrier.

- **Inappropriate use of language:**

- Special, challenged, handicapped, differently abled, handicapable, crazy, retarded, cripple, mentally defective, suffering from or a victim of [condition]
- Joking/in passing - “You’re so crazy” or “Are you blind?!”
- Phrasing, in the negative, “Wheelchair bound/confined”
- Normal, healthy, inspiration, miracle, cured, get better overcoming one’s disability

* Each person will have their own preference on how they want to be identified.

Ableism

Ableism is **a set of beliefs or practices that discriminate against people with disabilities**. It's based on the idea that people with disabilities are less valuable or capable than nondisabled people. **Ableism can be intentional or unintentional.**



attitudes
stereotypes
barriers
misconceptions
ableism

Common Disabilities:

- Physical or mobility
- Sensory (ex: deaf, blind)
- Developmental / intellectual /cognitive
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Mental health conditions



Injury/Disability: Spinal cord injury
Age: 42
Biggest barrier: "Too many to name, but huge gravel is one... The lip to ramps being too high off ground."
Favorite outdoor activity: Kayaking, hiking, and camping



Injury/Disability: Blind
Age: 60
Biggest barrier: Unmarked drop offs
Favorite outdoor activity: Hiking, biking, and climbing



Injury/Disability: Stroke
Age: 73
Biggest barrier: Lack of access to remote locations
Favorite outdoor activity: Hiking and skiing



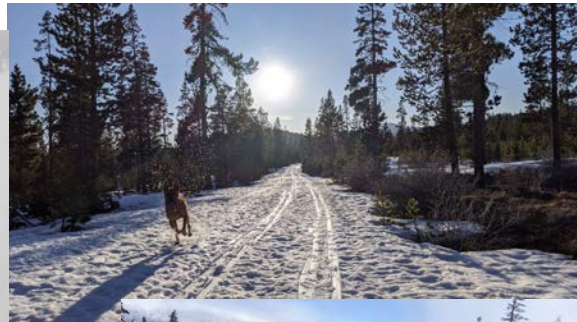
Injury/Disability: Low spinal cord injury with some leg mobility
Age: 30
Biggest barrier: Lose gravel and narrow car barriers like boulders
Favorite outdoor activity: Mountain biking and downhill skiing



Injury/Disability: Cerebral Palsy
Age: 18
Biggest barrier: Access to information about accessible trails and parks
Favorite outdoor activity: Kayaking and biking



VARIETY





"We all seek the same adventure, freedom and thrill of the outdoors."

ACCESSIBILITY MEANS MORE THAN ADA

What makes you feel welcome in outdoor spaces? When you visit a new park, how do you know that people want you to be there, that you belong?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed to make public spaces more accessible to people with disabilities at a time when people were barely getting out of their houses. Through the protection afforded by the ADA, people are more empowered than ever to get out and participate in all the same activities non-disabled people do.

As important as it is though, the ADA is really just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to making the outdoors inclusive for the full spectrum of people within the disabilities communities. People of all abilities mountain bike, road bike, climb, hike, kayak, hunt, fish, and explore like a majority of outdoor lovers. They too seek a variety of outdoor challenges, with opportunities to leisurely move through old growth forests or completely exhaust themselves after a strenuous hike or bike ride.

We all seek the same adventure, freedom, and thrill of the outdoors.

By thinking creatively and experientially, land managers can move past ADA compliance and into an equity-centered approach that provides a truly diverse range of access for all sorts of people. Inclusion is more than a short paved trail in a park—it's about creating options for diverse experiences that people of all abilities can enjoy.

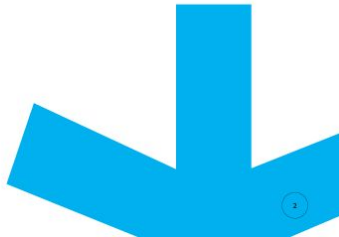
This Toolkit is designed to help land managers understand how people with disabilities engage with the outdoors and what they want out of those experiences. It offers recommendations and best practices for how to transform public lands in ways that are truly inclusive.

By developing an inclusive equity lens that takes into account all shades and forms of disability, making commitments to center equity in planning and programming, and thinking about someone's holistic experience on your land, you can help open up your spaces to your entire community in ways that honor and celebrate diversity.

OUR VISION:

Is that every person has equitable access to incredible outdoor recreation opportunities, regardless of their ability level. By focusing on social barriers to access as much as physical barriers, we envision a future where land managers proactively create spaces that are truly inclusive and welcoming for their communities.

Photos courtesy of Oregon Adaptive Sports, Adventures Without Limits, and Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection



PHYSICAL BARRIERS:

Physical barriers include any object or infrastructure that can physically prevent someone from accessing a space. These could be anything, from the size of gravel used in a parking lot to motor vehicle barriers at a trailhead.

Developing an equity lens for projects can look like imagining yourself in someone else's physical space. What would a viewpoint look like from a seated position? Will one single step on this trail prevent people in manual wheelchairs from being able to access the whole space?

COMMON PHYSICAL BARRIERS INCLUDE:

- TRAILS AROUND GATES
- LOOSE-PACKED GROUND COVER
- BALLARDS & BOULDERS
- INACCESSIBLE OR INCOMPLETE SIGNAGE
- ROOTS & ROCKS ON A TRAIL
- RAILINGS AT EYE-LEVEL
- STEPS & CURB CUTS
- DROP OFFS
- LACK OF TRANSPORTATION
- BUSY STREETS
- TRAIL AND SURFACE DEGRADATION
- BATHROOM PARTITIONS



* TEST IT OUT:

If you're wondering how a certain surface feels to navigate, or if you're wondering whether or not a railing is preventing someone from seeing a viewpoint in a seated position, bring a chair with you to test it out. This doesn't automatically mean that a space that's accessible for you is accessible for everyone else, but it can help you better understand other perspectives and make more informed decisions.



(COMMON)

SOCIAL **BARRIERS**

@oregonhealthoutdoors

-
- Not being invited to recreate
 - Seeing only able-bodied people in marketing materials
 - Unclear or incomplete information about the accessibility on website and signage
 - "Accessible features" being isolated from other parts of the park
 - Historical exclusion and inaccessibility of public lands
 - Harassment from able-bodied recreators

Identifying Barriers

- In groups of 2 - 4 discuss and identify all the **Physical** barriers you can for each image.



Identifying Barriers

- In groups of 2 - 4 discuss and identify all the **Sensory** barriers you can for each image.



Look at access holistically, from internal policy making to physical site design. **Access isn't just physical.**



Commitment

Deciding as a team that it is time to invest in Accessibility and writing it into policies and practices.

- Involving entire organization
- Research Disability and accessibility needs
- Draft an accessibility and inclusion statement as a team
- Seek out assistance
- Regular discussion in meetings



Learning & Education

Connecting and engaging with community. Reaching out to communities that have been excluded, individuals, organizations, consultants etc. Figuring out who is out there, what they're working on and how you can engage.

- Seek out trainings by people with disabilities
- In person workshops
- Partnerships with organizations and nonprofits
- Collect resources and create an organized resource archive
- Ask for feedback, surveys
- Listen



Consulting & Planning

Don't make assumptions! No matter how much you have learned, when making permanent decisions and alterations, you should consult with a professional with lived experience.

- Contracting with consultants in early phases of project development from new builds to upgrades,
 - Expect a rate of \$100 - \$200/hr
 - Meetings, design charrettes, reviews, community engagement, document reviews, language reviews.
 - Review work with consultants especially during design and development stages
 - Maintain relationships with consultants



Assessing & Collecting data

Use assessing to guide prioritization and progress, collect data on barriers and track learning. **Assessments are great tools for grant applications!**

- Hire a consultant to identify barriers and educate staff
- Develop Self-Assessment based on barrier identification
 - Identify key experiences, features, and services to assess
 - Train staff on how to use self-assessment
 - Create matrix for collecting data on barriers found by location and priority
 - Create a timeline for prioritization based on matrix and level of barrier
- Track progress with regular check-ins



Prioritizing

Develop a system based on your data collection rubric, timelines and funding opportunities to prioritize projects and upgrades.

- Hard barriers should take priority
- A lot of the work will be in the background and feel less tangible, this is where tracking learning and progress is helpful
- It can be easy to feel a sense of urgency and desire quick results but accessibility is a process that should not be rushed
- Education, resource collection, language updates, policy updates, etc. can all be great ways to make progress without large cost are just as important for longevity



Action Plan

Once you have identified barriers and agreed on priority of projects, it is time to put the work into action! Create a plan for each type of project.

- Document and policy update plan
- Barrier removal plan
- Information sharing plan
- Maintenance plan
 - Explicitly write Accessibility into your maintenance plans, timelines and schedules



Monitoring Progress

Surveys, data tracking, and feedback will help keep you on track and validate the work you're doing. This is the best way to not only feel a sense of accomplishment but to create sustainable change.

- Figure out where you're at
- Where you need to be
- What you can do
- How you're doing
- And what needs to be done to maintain and grow





Project Implicit

Jewish IAT

Jewish ('**Jewish People – Christian People**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize images culturally associated with Jewish people and Christian people, respectively.

Skin-tone IAT

Skin-tone ('**Light Skin - Dark Skin**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize light and dark-skinned faces. It often reveals an automatic preference for light-skin relative to dark-skin.

Transgender IAT

Transgender ('**Transgender People - Cisgender People**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish photos of transgender celebrity faces from photos of cisgender celebrity faces.

Arab-Muslim IAT

Arab-Muslim ('**Arab Muslim - Other People**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish names that are likely to belong to Arab-Muslims versus people of other nationalities or religions.

Native IAT

Native American ('**Native - White American**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize last names that are more likely to belong to Native Americans versus White Americans.

Hispanic IAT

Hispanic American ('**Hispanic American – European American**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize Hispanic and European American names.

Weight IAT

Weight ('**Fat - Thin**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of people who are obese and people who are thin. It often reveals an automatic preference for thin people relative to fat people.

Disability IAT

Disability ('**Physically Disabled – Physically Abled**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize figures representing physically disabled and physically abled people.

Race IAT

Race ('**Black - White**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin. It indicates that most Americans have an automatic preference for white over black.

OPEN TO ALL

A disability inclusion guide for
land trusts



Members of the Disability Network Northern Michigan make their way to the overlook at Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve.

Credit: Art Bukowski

PATH TO A MORE EQUITABLE FUTURE

Thank you to the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, an organization dedicated to making conservation more inclusive, supportive and meaningful for all communities they serve. With their permission we have adapted this diagram from one they share to address racial equity within their own culture and practice.

KEEP GROWING

The journey is never done. Plan how your staff and board will continue to increase internal knowledge and awareness.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Create a written agreement with executive leaders to reshape the organization to be more equitable. Write a DEI statement.

BOARD MEMBERS

Gain agreement and support from your board for a path to a more equitable organization.

COMMUNICATIONS

Evaluate organizational communications, messaging and content by establishing shared language and a plan for disability inclusion.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Seek partnership opportunities with agencies, organizations and businesses that support disability inclusion.

ACCESS

Conduct an accessibility audit that addresses different types of disabilities and develop an accessibility improvement plan.

PROGRAMS

Involve people from the disability community in program planning and evaluation to ensure your work is meeting your new commitment to inclusion.

INTERNAL DIVERSITY

Add diversity to your staff and board with transformative and purposeful recruitment and retention techniques and policies.

Path to a more equitable future

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Have staff and board participate in DEI training that includes disability and addresses implicit bias.



TEAM WORK

Get internal commitments to implementing inclusion from every member of your team. Support these efforts.

Birdability Site Review Checklist

Thank you for completing a Birdability Site Review to submit to the Birdability Map. Documenting the physical accessibility of birding locations helps ensure that birding truly is for everybody and every body! **Once complete, please visit birdability.org/map to submit.**

Question numbers on this checklist correspond to the question numbers in the online Birdability Site Review; not all questions in Part 1 are included on this printable checklist.


Part 1: General Information	Part 2: Birding Location Accessibility Criteria
1. a) Trail/bird blind name:	1. Parking  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No parking area <input type="checkbox"/> Pull-off areas (for car birding) <input type="checkbox"/> Signed accessible parking spaces. Number: <input type="checkbox"/> Van accessible parking spaces. Parking space is 132 in. (3.3m) wide, with extra 60 in. (1.5m) wide aisle/side space for a ramp. Number: <input type="checkbox"/> Curb cuts present from parking lot to sidewalk/trail <input type="checkbox"/> Surface is paved <input type="checkbox"/> Surface is gravel <input type="checkbox"/> Surface has many potholes/bumps <input type="checkbox"/> Parking on unmanageable slope Comments:
1. b) Location name (park or area):	
4) Good car birding site? Describe if so:	
6) Length of trail:	
7) Type of trail:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Loop <input type="checkbox"/> Out-and-back <input type="checkbox"/> Lollipop (out-and-back with a loop attached)	
8. a) Entrance fee?	2. Services available at this location  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor center <input type="checkbox"/> Staff or volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive programs <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible tram or motorized tour <input type="checkbox"/> Gated areas (for example, drive-up bird blinds) accessible if arranged ahead of time <input type="checkbox"/> Meals available <input type="checkbox"/> Water fountains outside buildings <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible water fountains, no higher than 36 in. (91 cm) from the ground, outside buildings Comments, including visitor center hours:
8. b) Parking fee?	
9) Nearby public transit information, including route numbers, stop names:	
10) Walking or biking access from residential areas:	

The Birdability Map is a crowdsourced map that describes in detail the accessibility features of birding locations all over the world. It is a work-in-progress, and anyone can contribute to it by submitting a Birdability Site Review.

Crooked River Wetlands

Right click the link below and select "copy link..." to share this site:
[Share this location.](#)

Date Submitted	April 4, 2022
Site Name	Crooked River Wetlands
Website	www.cityofprineville.com/wetlands
Is this a good car birding site?	Yes
Car Birding Comments	Accessible to all, strollers, wheelchairs, walkers. Nice paved trail with lots of birding opportunities! This is where we went this year to do our annual bird count.
Units of measurement	Miles
Length of trail	1.00
Trail Type	Loop
Entrance & Parking Fees	No
Site Fee	No fee



Map data: © 2021 USGS | Esri, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA
Powered by Esri

ACCESSIBILITY TOOLKIT

for Land Managers

RETHINKING DISABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE OUTDOORS.

QUICK TIPS - FOR BETTER ACCESS

COMMON DIMENSIONS

Because repetition is important, here are some quick references and resources to keep on hand.

Wheelchairs come in many variations, these are some common dimensions and configurations to take note of:



COMMON OBSTACLES

Some of the most common obstacles that don't seem like much but can make or break someone's visit:

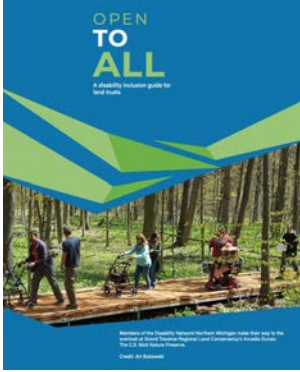
Distance between objects like gates, boulders, and ballards should be a minimum of 30" for wheelchair access.



PHYSICAL BARRIERS:

GROUND SURFACING:





RESOURCES

[Harvard Implicit Association Test](#) - Project Implicit

[Open to All: A disability inclusion guide for land trusts](#)

Birdability [Access Considerations](#) Site Review Checklist

[ACCESSIBILITY TOOLKIT](#) for Land Managers

Birdability Site Review Checklist

Thank you for completing a Birdability Site Review to submit to the Birdability Map. Documenting the physical accessibility of your location helps ensure that visiting truly is for everybody and every body! Once complete, please email birdability@openlands.org to submit.

Question numbers on this checklist correspond to the question numbers in the online Birdability Site Review, not all questions in Part 1 are included on this printable checklist.

Part 1: General Information	Part 2: Walking Location Accessibility Criteria
1. Is the location named? <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Parking area <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is location named (path or area)? <input type="checkbox"/>	2. Is a paved surface on the walking route? <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is location named (path or area)? <input type="checkbox"/>	3. Is a paved surface on the walking route? <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is there a parking lot? Describe if so: <input type="checkbox"/>	4. Is a paved surface on the walking route? <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Length of trail: <input type="checkbox"/>	5. Is a paved surface on the walking route? <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Type of trail: <input type="checkbox"/>	6. Is a paved surface on the walking route? <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is there a parking lot? <input type="checkbox"/>	7. Is a paved surface on the walking route? <input type="checkbox"/>
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