The aim of the campaign

The objectives of the TCoYT campaign are to promote trail stewardship and improve the image of our sport; to recognise the work of many MTB volunteers; to encourage new or strengthen existing partnerships; and to protect the places we love to ride. Trail maintenance across Europe is conducted largely on a volunteer basis. Without the volunteers and trail associations, we would not have the trail network we have today. TCoYT is a means to recruit new volunteers and get people stoked about helping with maintenance events.

The aim of the campaign is to highlight the **quality and quantity** of trail repair work happening across European mountain biking communities and to **get more people involved** in helping maintain their local trails. We are looking for organisers of existing or new trail maintenance groups to sign up and run a trail maintenance event in the campaign month. Volunteers of all ages and abilities will hit the trails in their local areas to take part in the event.

Getting involved

There are three simple steps to taking part in Take Care of Your Trails.

Step one: Plan your event

Step two: Get the word out!

Step three: Hit the trails!

To make things clearer this year and to help groups who like to participate in TCoYT, we'll organise a series of 4 online classes on trail building and maintenance 101. We will go through the general principles of trail maintenance and TCoYT event planning.

Step 1 : Plan your event

Rule #1 from the IMBA rules of the trails (etiquette guide) is always plan ahead before you hit the trails. This applies to trail maintenance; you need to plan way ahead. Whether you're just clearing winter windfall or digging a benchcut switchback, it is important to always consider the following guidelines.

We've developed some basic criteria for your event to qualify for inclusion in the campaign. Should you have any questions about running an 'event', please contact us.

1.Get permission from the land owner / manager

The event must **be** hosted by the landowner, or you must have the landowner's prior permission to undertake your trail repair or trail-building session. Even if you have permission from the landowner/manager, it's always a good idea to keep the line of communication open throughout the year. A lot of crews do a very good job of this, and

some not so much. You might want to invite the land manager to your TCoYT event so they can see how much good work the mountain biking community is doing week in, week out. It might be that the MTB community can assist the land manager with any issues that are occurring in that area. For example, removing invasive plant species.

Communication is key to maintaining a good relationship.

How do I get permission?

Permission to conduct any type of trail maintenance work will depend on who owns or manages the land. The process for getting approval can vary widely from country to country. The best place to start is by **emailing or calling** the land manager/owner directly to schedule a meeting to discuss your intentions. You might even talk to other experienced crews in the area/region, and find out the process in which they got permission to conduct maintenance.

2.Have adequate insurance

To keep you and your volunteers safe, ensure you have the necessary **insurance** in place to run your event. You might want to check whether your municipality or site manager has volunteer insurance in place.

3.Get the right people to lead your event

If you've never run a trail maintenance event before, reach out to us personally so we can advise on what you should / shouldn't do out on the trails. To organise a Take Care of Your Trails event, we ask that you have an **appropriately experienced or qualified leader** to plan as follows:

1. In the preparation stage, you should conduct a trail assessment as part of planning your event. The trail assessment shows what needs to be done and how to break it into smaller packages. Within this assessment, you should also be conducting an 'environmental assessment', looking at the local environment and its needs.
2. You should ensure you have enough leaders based on your group's size. We recommend a **1:6 ratio** for any work that requires hand tools.
3. You should ensure that you have adequate **First Aid provision** to meet the needs of the group and the work location (including communication tools and a plan should medical assistance be needed).
4. You should complete a **volunteer sign-in sheet prior** to commencing work. This should include names and emergency contact numbers.
5. You should ensure that volunteers are **adequately briefed** prior to the event and adequately supervised during the event.
6. Make sure you have a range of tasks planned to suit the ages and experience levels of your group, e.g., litter picking for those without experience, with appropriate personal protective equipment. Allow enough time for the leaders to share their experience and knowledge. This way, volunteers will feel useful and empowered.
7. If you are running a session offered to children or young people (under 18), your group should have the necessary child protection measures in place, or be clear that any children or young people who wish to attend will need to be accompanied by a

supervising responsible adult.

4: Be organised

Picking a date to host a trail maintenance event is the easy part. The hard part is putting all the pieces of the puzzle together and figuring out how to utilise all the volunteers (or lack of) that show up on the day. The end goal is to keep people busy and happy. To do that, you need to plan for all kinds of contingencies:

- How will the day go if five people show up?

- What if 50 show up?

- How will you keep them all busy?

- Are there enough tools?

- Who will help you oversee the work?

- Who's bringing the food, water, entertainment, and post-work beverages?

Remember, your job isn't just to get the work done. It's also to **make people feel welcome, appreciated, and rewarded.** And you need a plan for doing all of these before you set a date for the trail day. (some handy tips sourced from Bicycling magazine)

5: Register online

Ok, now that you've ticked those boxes. It's time to register online. Head to the 'Take Care of Your Trails' official website and register via TAKE ACTION in the main menu.

All you need to do is enter a few details about yourself, your crew, the event, and where we can find you. In order to share your event with our community, we ask that you send us an **image** of your crew for our social media channels.

Can I host more than one event?

YES! Of course you can. If you want to use the full month to ramp up your online presence and recruit new volunteers, then by all means organise more than one event. We are more than happy to spread the word through social media.

Step 2 : Get the word out

We'd like to help you promote your event through our social media channels and network. That's why it's important to include as much information as possible in your entry form bio, as well as supply us with nice images of your crew.

Better engagement with the crews.

Thanks to the great feedback from crews, we are working hard to make sure this year's campaign is better than ever. What does this mean? Well, by giving you the tools to make your campaign more effective at reaching a wider audience and driving better engagement.

IMBA Europe aims to support crews better by:

- Sharing weekly social media posts highlighting the different crews taking part in TCoYT

- Providing you with TCoYT marketing material to promote your event

- Giving regular updates on the progress of the campaign through our newsletter

- Better support for new trail crews. First time organising a TCoYT event? We're here to help you make the most out of your event. You can contact the IMBA Europe team via info@imba-europe.com

How can you make your event bigger and better

If you want to engage a new audience and get more people enthusiastic about trail maintenance, you need to make the first impression last. To reach a wider audience, you might try using different communication channels such as;

- Reaching out to your local bike shop and hanging up a TCoYT poster in their window with the event plans

- Create a Facebook event page with the link to the TCoYT website

- Post regularly on social media

- Share the event at your kids' school to get better youth involvement.

- Reach out to local hikers, walkers, and trail runners to join in the fun

- Get a local business on board to sponsor the event

Make it fun!

TCoYT is meant to be a fun event that helps crews build their community by engaging with new people and recruiting more volunteers. We've seen some great events over the years. The ones who had the most impact and success were those who made a whole day of the event.

For example TCoYT maintenance event could look like this:

8:30 am - Arrival and coffee at the trail head

8:45am - Briefing- Explain what everyone will be doing,

separate into groups of 6 (6:1 ratio)

9:00 am-ish - Hit the trails

11:00 am - Coffee break!

13:00 pm - Lunch - BBQ for volunteers

14:00 pm - Optional MTB ride

Step 3 : Hit the trails!

You've ticked all the boxes! You've got permission to run your TCoYT event, you've got

adequate insurance, you've planned ahead to have a fun day out, rain, hail, or shine, with 5 people or 50 people!

During the event:

Better communication and engagement with crews was the biggest takeaway we received from your feedback on the previous campaign. In order to get better exposure for you and your crew, you can do the following:

- Follow IMBA Europe on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook

- Tag IMBA Europe on your social media channels

- Send us pictures of your TCoYT event

- Put together a short recap of the event. Who was there, what did you achieve, and who was the trail champion for the day?

Throughout the month of MAY, we will be sharing your stories across our social media channels, website, and newsletter.

After the event:

We encourage all crews participating to conduct a 'trail report' via the Take Care of Your Trails website.

Please send us all photos, videos, and anything you want to include in your final recap of your event. This will not only be great promotional material for what you and your crew have achieved, but will also help us assess your efforts when we consider awarding the TCoYT awards.