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Cranbrook-Kimberley Trail



Canadian Pacific Railway's St. Mary's River Bridge to be soon converted to a trail bridge.
Al Skucas photo.

by Al Skucas

The Cranbrook to Kimberley Rail Trail Project took a big leap forward on November 15th of 2007. MP Jim Abbott announced that the federal and provincial governments will invest more than \$1.8 million to turn the abandoned railway between Cranbrook and Kimberley into a 25 kilometer trail. The contribution will be through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF).

“The rails to trails project will convert this unused railway grade into a community recreational trail, encouraging residents of Cranbrook and Kimberly to be active and get outdoors,” said Mr. Abbott. The funding enables the City of Cranbrook and Kimberley to turn an abandoned railway along Highway 95A into a 25-kilometre, three-metre wide commuter and recreation path that connects to existing trails in Cranbrook and Kimberley. The project is conditionally approved pending the successful completion of an environmental assessment.

CP Rail is committed to removing the rails this year which will allow development of the trail to start later on in the year and hopefully be complete by 2009.

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A colour version of Trail Talk is available on-line at www.trailsbc.ca.

Trans Canada Trail Challenge 2008: Myra Station to Pentiction

by Léon Lebrun

Special efforts are being made to hold the eighth edition of BC's Trans Canada Trail Challenge in conjunction with the re-opening of the Myra Canyon and the Pentiction Centennial celebrations. There will not be a Southwest Region challenge event this year in order to allow the planning team and volunteers more time to concentrate on the Okanagan KVR Challenge.



The main or full challenge will be an 80-km bike ride from Myra Station to Pentiction. The first 36 km is mainly flat and the last 44 km is almost completely downhill. Those who are reasonably fit can quite easily do the trip in less than 6 hours but those that like to spend time along the way appreciating the sites and heritage values can take up to 10 hours.

The trip features a rail trail in mountain terrain along with canyons, creeks, cliffs, train trestles/bridges, tunnels, spectacular views, effects of a major forest fire, rock ovens, and vineyards, to name the main attractions. It is a superb trip!



Trestle No. 4 nearing completion in the Myra Canyon. Photographs courtesy of Katim Enterprises Ltd.



Laying down a new deck on Trestle 12. Murphy Shewchuk photo.

Participants will also be given the opportunity to take shorter trips on foot and on bicycle at the Myra Canyon end of the trail. An equestrian component is also being considered.

It is due to the hard work of our

Trails BC Okanagan Directors, the Myra Canyon Restoration Society, the Naramata Woodwackers, the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society, and the Canadian Ski Patrol that this event is able to take place. Others such as a local amateur radio club and other groups are likely to join in.

Those wanting more details and wishing to register for the Challenge event should go to the Trails BC website at www.trailsbc.ca starting mid-February.

Because participants need to be shuttled for the full challenge, spaces will be limited. Register early.

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Additional Information and sign-up forms are available on-line at:
WWW.TRAILSBC.CA

It will be held on Sunday, July 6, 2008 following the official re-opening of the Myra Canyon on June 21st and 22nd. Some of us will be fortunate enough to take in both events.

Paleface Pass Passable

by Léon Lebrun

In 2005 the BC Ministry of Forests decided to decommission the Paleface Forest Road with about 90 cross ditches. Most of the ditches were so deep that they were impossible to negotiate with a bicycle and were most unpleasant to walk through. We advised people to not use this portion of the trail, thus seriously impacting the Trans Canada Trail west of Hope.



While Bill Kirkness pilots the Kubota excavator, Ray Lebrun operates a landscaping rake.
Photo courtesy of Rose Schroeder.

Funding received to modify waterbars.

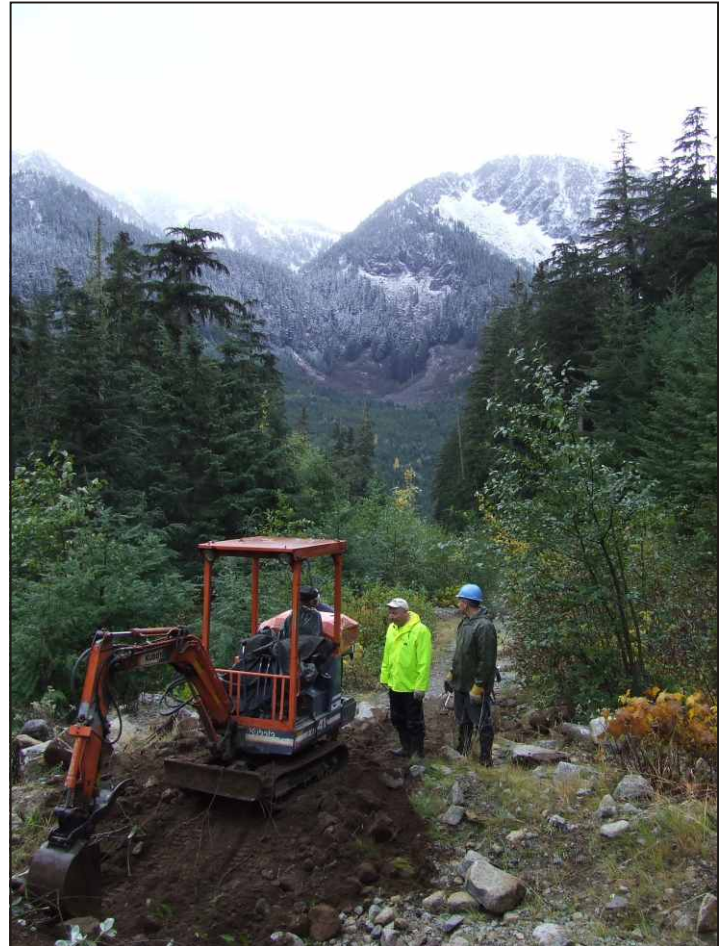
After much discussion with the Ministry of Forests or more precisely, their Timber Sales branch, we came to an agreement whereby funding was found to allow us to modify 80 cross ditches (waterbars) to make them passable. The work took place with a small landscape excavator followed by slave volunteers during a four-day stint in October, 2007. About seven of the old waterbars weren't deep enough to require machine work. A bit more hand work will be needed on a few ditches on the final approach to the pass.

The pass is at an elevation of 4500 feet (1370 metres) and snow was at our heels as the job was being completed.

Trail to re-open in July, 2008.

This work rectified most of the problems and the trail will reopen soon after the snow clears, which could be as late as the second week in July, 2008. The Paleface Pass-Chilliwack River Valley route is one of the toughest along the BC TCT and is for the more

adventurous cyclists. Despite the challenges, the unique West Coast scenery of the rugged sub-alpine pass and the dense rainforest can be rewarding.



Left to right: Bill Kirkness, partially hidden behind the Kubota excavator, Ray Lebrun and Léon Lebrun. Note the snow on the trees in the background. Photo courtesy of Rose Schroeder.

Heavily-loaded cyclists may want to consider Fraser Valley Roads.

For most heavily-loaded cyclists, a much easier unsigned, mainly road route between Hope and Chilliwack is probably the better way to travel. This alternate route is described in the Trails BC website.

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Vancouver Island Report

by Jeannette Klein

In November 2007, the city of Victoria announced ambitious plans for a new multiuse waterfront pathway from Ogden Point to Rock Bay. This pathway will connect with the existing Galloping Goose Trail, part of the TCT system. It is hoped that this could become our link to connect the TCT with the Pacific coastline.

The 2006 acquisition of the E & N rail corridor on Vancouver Island by the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) has given new opportunities for rerouting the TCT from backroads to trails using this right of way. The ICF, a partnership of First Nations and local governments along the E & N line, was created to ensure this rail right of way from Esquimalt to Campbell River was not lost and could be used to enhance local communities. Fortunately for the TCT this includes the concept of rails-with-trails. CVRD park planners have already identified portions of the rail corridor that can be utilized in the Chemainus area.

These initiatives are just 2 of the many trail projects that are happening or being planned on Vancouver Island. Although many of them are not specifically Trans Canada Trail they often will connect to the TCT and indicate the desire for trail systems that is happening Canada wide.

Although it seemed that the Kinsol Trestle reconstruction project in the Cowichan Valley was a

‘done deal’, progress has been slowed by a much needed review of the historical value of the Kinsol. In October the provincial Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Arts Heritage Branch facilitated a discussion group to formulate a description of the Kinsol’s historical significance. If the Kinsol is officially described as a provincial heritage trestle it will be restored instead of being removed and replaced with a replica structure.

For several years the staff of the Selkirk Station Bicycle Rental Shop

located beside the Galloping Goose Trail has worked at the removal of graffiti from the Victoria TCT pavilion, which has the dubious reputation of being the most ‘graffitied’ pavilion in Canada. They can now rest easy and we thank them. The City of Victoria sign and paint shop will take on that responsibility and have already refurbished the pavilion.



Regional District of Nanaimo Parks pedestrian bridge over the Top River near Parksville. Not on the TCT, but an example of what is happening on the Island. Photo by Jeannette Klein.

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Okanagan Tidbits

by Ben Veldhoen

There were two severe weather events in the Okanagan late in 2007. Heavy rains in early fall caused a washout at Robinson Creek. It was repaired. Later in 2007 a major windstorm left plenty of blowdown on the right-of-way at higher elevations. A few of the majestic old growth Ponderosa pines bit the dust. Shades of things to come?

Greater than normal snowfall so far this winter make for perfect cross country skiing particularly at Chute Lake. Washrooms along the trail are being maintained.

Preservation of the trail for recreational purposes continues to be a challenge. Above Naramata, near the Arawana station site, a major residential subdivision is being developed. Heavy construction equipment is

using the railway grade to access the development land. No one has the legal authority to stop the traffic.

Conflict between recreational user groups was mitigated by offering bottled water provided by the Naramata Parks and Recreation Commission at the remote Woodwacker camp near Rock Oven Regional Park. Everybody seems to drink and appreciate the same water!

After the 2003 Okanagan Mountain fire and the burning of the Myra Canyon trestles, traffic on the Trans-Canada Trail from the east has dwindled to a trickle. We are expecting an influx of users, starting with the Trans-Canada Trail Challenge in early July.

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Coquihalla River Trail Bridge by 2010?

by Léon Lebrun

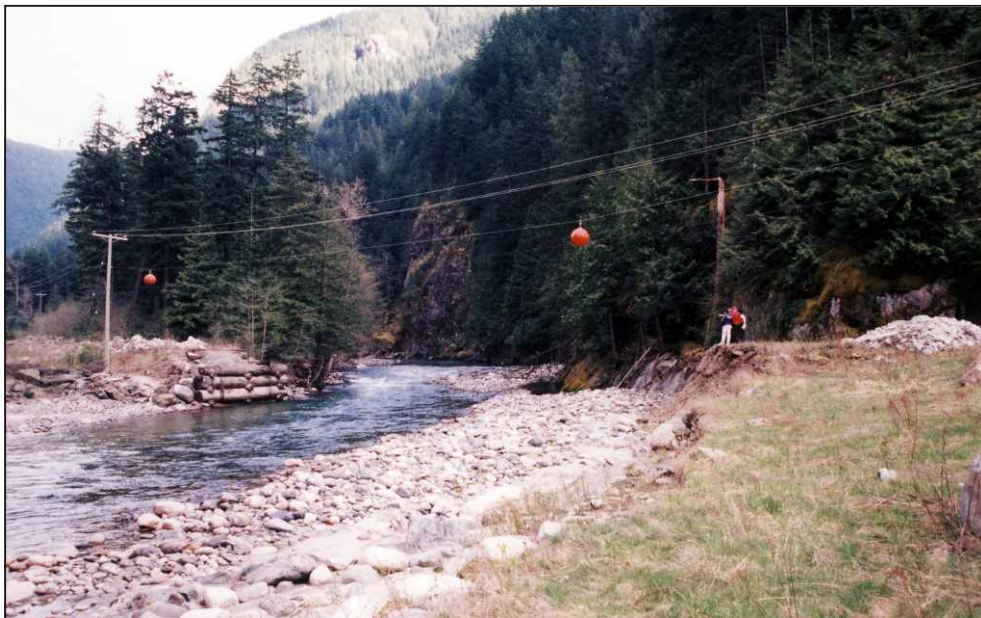
The Coquihalla Trail Bridge is a major project to be located on the Trans Canada Trail 21 km northeast from the Hope town centre where the trail crosses the Coquihalla River. It is within a narrow corridor shared by Highway #5, two pipelines, a fibre optic cable, and a power line. The location allows for a bridge structure that will not encroach on any of these properties. It is up river on crown land adjacent to these right-of-ways and more specifically along the Spectra Energy gas pipeline. This differs slightly to the location of a previous service road bridge that was washed away in 1995

resulting in a considerable widening of the river, and was partially located in the Spectra Energy pipeline right-of-way. The proposed bridge will be located slightly further up river to stay clear of Hydro lines and the Spectra Energy pipeline right-of-way.

The Trans Canada Trail generally parallels Highway #5 and needs to accommodate cyclists, walkers, and equestrians. Currently, without the proposed bridge, walkers and equestrians along this portion of the Trans Canada Trail are forced to ford the Coquihalla River. It is not advisable to cross the river at any time because it is either quite dangerous or impossible for much of the year due to high volume flow, fast current, and coarse bottom.

Cyclists are allowed and are forced on the highway to avoid the river ford for 7.5 km when travelling west or for 4.5 km when travelling east. A centre line concrete barrier and high speed vehicular traffic prevents crossing the highway thus creating the different distances going east as opposed to west. Riding on the shoulder of Highway 5 is uncomfortable and unsafe for even the seasoned cyclists because the 110 km/hr speed limit that is commonly exceeded.

The lack of a bridge at this location creates a risky dilemma for Trans Canada Trail users because neither of the choices of staying on the highway or attempting to ford the river is desirable or safe. Unfortunately, our



The site of the proposed trail bridge across the Coquihalla River. Photo by Léon Lebrun.

routing leads the user to this location thus creating possible high risks. In other words, the TCT is effectively severed for 7.5 km. and the existing alternatives pose serious danger.

With a bridge, the much improved routing will attract many more trail users because they will see this as a legitimate continuation of the Kettle Valley Rail Corridor to Hope via the famous Othello Tunnels on the former KVR. Other features include mountain views, the highly picturesque Coquihalla River, and wilderness camping. Yet, it is only 20 km from the historical town of Hope where all needed amenities can be found.

Due to a number of challenges, Don Reid, one of our volunteers, has come up with a design that no longer will be using the suspension bridge that we had announced about a year ago. Following final approvals, hopefully, we will be able to start construction by early 2009 if not before. Of course, this is dependent on our ability to raise the required \$270,000 to build such a structure.

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West Kootenay Report

by Sue Burnham

Thanks to the efforts of members Columbia and Western Trail Society and Trails BC, the Rail/Trail immediately north of Castlegar was raked and groomed early in the season, making the Trail safer and easier to travel. The C+W members continued to work on the Trail all summer, keeping up with the grooming, weeding and culvert clearing needed to keep the Rail/Trail in good condition. Still in the Castlegar area, there is good news from the Brilliant Bridge Restoration Society who have recently received a \$150,000 grant from the Central Kootenay RD to help with the cost of restoring this historic Kootenay River crossing. The Ministry of Transportation has also helped by providing the Society with the money it would have taken to have the bridge removed. Plans are to have the bridge re-surfaced by the summer of 2008.

Trail between Ootischenia and Trail rough...

Work continues on the Columbia Trail between Ootischenia and the city of Trail, but this stretch is still

very rough. It is recommended that those travelling with loaded bicycles use the highway to travel from Castlegar to Trail.

New panel added to TCT Pavilion...

Citizens of the Trail area have been very supportive of the TCTF Metre Sales Programme and a new panel of names has recently been added to the TCT pavilion at Gyro Park. In the Pend D'Oreille region, south and east of the city of Trail, the TCT was under siege from summer forest fires. The Trail survived, but was closed for several weeks as fire-fighters were using the route to reach the fire zone.

Good news in Salmo/Nelson area...

There is more good news to report in the Salmo/Nelson area. All stakeholders have agreed to having the Great Northern Rail/Trail included in the Trans Canada Trail system. Travelers will then connect with the highway and ferry to reach Gray Creek Pass, the route to the East Kootenays.

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The Haller Trail

by Larri Woodrow

For the past twelve years, Trails BC horsemen have partnered with Back Country Horsemen of BC members to keep a little known, cherished Cariboo horse trail clear of windfalls. Twenty four horsemen from various points of the province attended the May 2007 workbee and ride. Riders hauled their horses and mules from Lillooet, Quesnel, 100 Mile, Langley, Courtenay, Merville and Black Creek to the trailhead near Jesmond, west of Clinton.

In his journal, Simon Fraser and his men reported seeing natives mounted on their horses near this area as he and his men made their epic journey of discovery downstream for the North West Company in 1808. This year, during Canada's Equine Week, when on an end of May workbee on the Haller Trail, recreational horsemen will celebrate the 200th anniversary of Fraser's accomplishment.

Trails BC has always been intended to be an organization to embrace all provincial trails. The Haller is one such example. Murphy and Katharine Shewchuk have ridden it when Murphy GPSed a good part of it a few years ago.



Larri Woodrow (left) with John Hawkings and Larri's mule, Appalouie, at Eddy's Lookout on the Haller Trail high above the Fraser River. Photo by Hank McEwan.

Eddy Grinder was a native horseman who rode trails and hunted this area. On a chilly October night my trail partner and I over-nighted with Eddy and his two sons. My partner and I had intended to pitch our tent nearby, but Eddy insisted we join him in his woodstove warmed cabin. With the thermometer plunging, his offer was too good to refuse.

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F.O.S.S. Maintains Trails

by Penny Gubbels



July 2007: FOSS volunteers build a section of trail through Kelowna's Priest Creek Linear Park (the trail provides public access to Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park).

Photo by Teresa Brinton.

The Kelowna-based Friends of the South Slopes (F.O.S.S.) is a non-profit Society formed in 1996. It is a volunteer organization with no paid staff. Its area of interest is Kelowna's South Slopes which includes a section of the Trans Canada Trail along the old Kettle Valley Railway line, two provincial parks (Myra-Bellevue and Okanagan Mountain), and trails on Crown land.

F.O.S.S. supports projects that enhance recreational opportunities while respecting the natural environment. The South Slopes is widely known for its extensive trail system and it is a popular mountain biking, hiking and horse back riding area. Many of the South Slope trails were severely impacted by the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park forest fire and F.O.S.S. has undertaken many projects to restore trails and bridges.

In Myra-Bellevue Park, these projects include:

- Partnered with BC Parks to construct a trailhead and parking lot.

- Built an information kiosk.

- Purchased and installed trail and information signs and 'you are here' maps throughout the park.

- Constructed foot bridges and boardwalks (in Okanagan Mtn. Park as well).

Erosion mitigation projects on trails.

Trail improvement and maintenance.

Adopt-A-Trail program.

Produced a trail map of Myra-Bellevue (available at most outdoor stores in Kelowna).

F.O.S.S. has a signed Volunteer Agreement with BC Parks and works in partnership with Ministry staff.



April 2007: Volunteers clear brush prior to the construction of Priest Creek Trail. Photo by Penny Gubbels.

As well, F.O.S.S. has coordinated trail clearing projects on Crown land in the Joe Rich/Mission Creek area of the South Slopes, and plan to erect signage in 2008.

Friends of the South Slopes support the inclusion of public access to the South Slopes when adjacent private properties are developed. F.O.S.S. partners with the City of Kelowna Parks Department to construct and maintain these access trails.

For more information, please visit the F.O.S.S. website: www.foss-kelowna.org or contact the Secretary at: info@foss-kelowna.org

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Renew Your 2008 Membership

As we begin another year of work on the British Columbia portion of the Trans Canada Trail, we ask for your continued support and membership renewal.

Individual: \$25 Group Member: \$100
Business Associate: \$100

Payment may be made by sending a cheque to the office or by paying on-line at www.trailsbc.ca. Tax receipts will be issued for individual membership payments (as well as all donations).

As you will read in the newsletter, there is progress being made in each of the regions across the province. Our dedicated volunteers continue to work with individual citizens, TBC member groups, local businesses and all three levels of Government in order to reach the goal of having the B.C. Trans Canada Trail navigable from Victoria to the Alberta border by 2010.

We can't do it without you!

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Similkameen Trails

by Joe Littlefield

Our quest is to establish a chain of trails linking all communities through the Similkameen Valley from Manning park to the U.S. border and east to Osoyoos. This would create an addition to the successful RDOS trail system and bring new leisure and business opportunities to the Similkameen Valley.

We will work to rededicate traditional trails that follow the river and provide a historical reference that connects First Nations with new Canadians.

We expect to achieve this by encouraging neighborhoods to establish safe walking and biking circuits within their communities; then we can link communities with trails.

This is being tested with the Keremeos Village Promenade, a walking and wheelchair circuit, over the old rail bed and the dike; with proposed links to the

Red Bridge and to Kobau Park in Cawston. The Promenade volunteers are fundraising in order to complete the project. This project is a joint venture between the Village and the Trails Society.

Trail sections from the Red Bridge to Kobau Park were surveyed by local Trail Scouts who noted items and issues along the abandoned railbed and the dike. This information is part of the RDOS district-wide trail inventory assembled to manage and budget for trails. Contact similkameentrails@nethop.net for more information.



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