

TALK on the TRAIL

Okanagan Rail Trail Design & Construction Update #2

Issue 2: August 2017



WE BROKE GROUND!

Last month was a big one for construction on the trail. We officially broke ground with our 1km Test Section in Lake Country. Thank-you to Dennis O'Rourke and The Chase Wines for donating construction services to complete this section of the trail. To show the community what's to come, we held a Rail Trail Showcase on July 29th. This outdoor open house saw over 400 attendees who came out to test the trail. This issue of Talk on The Trail will cover the event then dive into some of the technical elements of constructing the trail. This month, we'll look at environmental and agricultural considerations of the Okanagan Rail Trail project.

– Interjurisdictional Development Team

ABOUT THE RAIL TRAIL TEST SECTION EVENT

On Saturday, July 29th, the Rail Trail Interjurisdictional Development Team invited the community to Lake Country for a Rail Trail Showcase. This was an open house-style event where the public was invited to walk or ride their bike on the recently-constructed showcase section and learn about what goes into developing this community-centred project. Over **400 people** were in attendance and the event received lots of media attention.

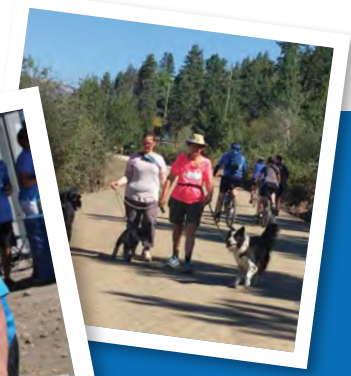


What We Did	Why It's Important
Increased the width of the trail from 3m to 4.6m reusing on-site materials	To allow for increased traffic now and into the future
Cleared and grubbed (shrub and weed removal)	Keeps trail clear of vegetation, which reduces maintenance issues long-term
Graded and compacted	To ensure proper drainage and to make the surface of the trail more user-friendly
Imported and placed surface materials (see images below)	To provide an enhanced user experience for trail users



Why construct the test section here?

Construction took place between McCarthy Road and Lodge Road in Lake Country, BC. This section of the trail was free of permitting and not located within the ALR. In other words, we could start working on this section immediately!



In partnership with:



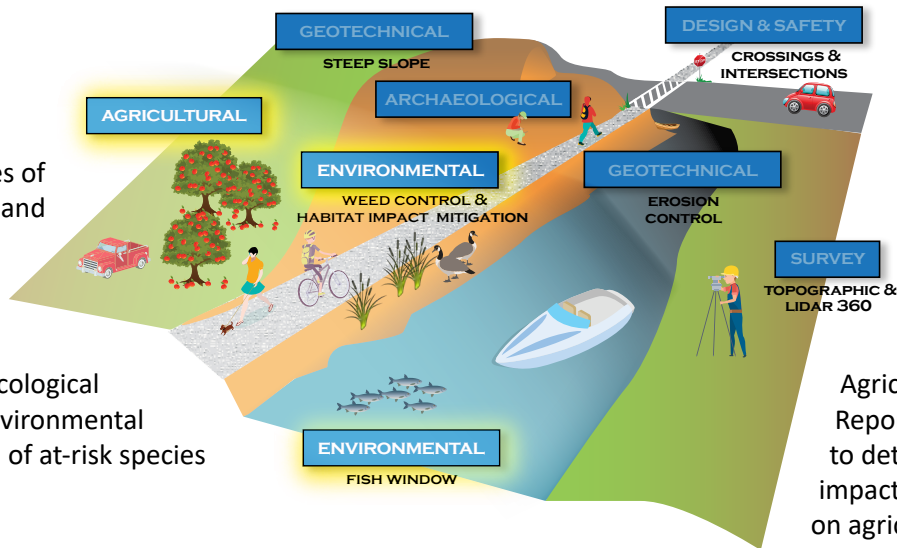
WHAT GOES INTO DEVELOPING THE TRAIL?

ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

When developing the trail, one of the first technical considerations before construction can occur, is an environmental and agricultural assessment. These plans will help to minimize impacts to existing habitats and farm land.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The rail trail corridor follows the shorelines of three different lakes and crosses the riparian area of several creeks. In some places, the corridor is in or adjacent to ecological reserves, areas of environmental sensitivity, and areas of at-risk species or ecosystems.



AGRICULTURAL

Approximately 8.8 km of the land within and adjacent to the Okanagan Rail Trail corridor is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). An Agricultural Assessment Report has been completed to determine the potential impacts of trail development on agricultural production.

What kind of wildlife can be found along the trail?

The trail is home to nesting birds, fish, small and medium-sized mammals, bats, reptiles, and amphibians.

What considerations will be made to reduce construction impacts to existing wildlife on the trail?

Timing Windows – fish window, nesting bird window – what does this all mean?

To minimize environmental impacts, the best working “window” to avoid disrupting resident wildlife has been determined. Construction practices can then be scheduled around when fish spawn on the foreshore or when birds nest in the area. Consideration will also be given to hibernating amphibians, reptiles, and bats.

Are environmental approvals required? If so, why?

Yes. The IDT has submitted the Section 11 application to the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development. Applications are required under the Water Sustainability Act for any work ‘in or about a stream,’ which includes all lakes, rivers, creeks, and wetlands in the province.

How can impacts to agricultural land be mitigated?

Some recommendations include:

- Weed and invasive plant management
- Retaining and maintaining buffers between trail and agricultural land (ie. vegetation, elevation, existing fencing)
- Develop a Code of Conduct to inform trail users of etiquette in agricultural areas
- Install permanent signage along the trail

I’m a landowner in the ALR adjacent to the trail and have some questions. Who can I contact?

All adjacent ALR landowners have been mailed notification letters and will have an opportunity to provide comments and concerns to the IDT and the ALC.

Are agricultural approvals required? If so, why?

Yes. The IDT has submitted its application to the Agricultural Land Commission. Approval by the ALC is required for recreation uses on agricultural lands, which are protected to ensure the continued availability of quality land for agricultural use.

Progress Report	What’s Next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of 1km Test Section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of trail design, alignment, and intersections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail Trail Showcase event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated construction cost estimate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental and Agricultural applications completed and submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender for work within fish window and sensitive areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archeological protocol being developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrianization of bridges (underway)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% design being reviewed by each owner 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock scaling and erosion design underway 	

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns about the trail, you are encouraged to contact your local jurisdictional office.