



NEWS RELEASE

Update: December 20, 2024

SPLATSIN TE SECWÉPEMC RAIL TRAIL UPDATE

The Rail Trail partners—Splat'sin te Secwépemc, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSR), and the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO)—are excited to announce the next stages of construction are ready to proceed in 2025. The rail trail partners have been collaborating since 2015 to develop a 50-kilometre greenway for walking and cycling. This scenic trail connects the communities of Sicamous, CSR Electoral Area E, RDNO Electoral Area F, Enderby, Splat'sin, the Township of Spallumcheen, and Armstrong.

Upcoming construction will include flood erosion repairs along Mara Lake and the Shuswap River, aggregate surfacing of the trail, pedestrian-friendly modifications to rail bridges, road crossings, signage installation, and improved trailhead access between km 0.0 in Sicamous and km 42.6 at Stepney X Road.

Final approvals from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) are still pending after the CSR and RDNO agreed this spring to offer crossing easements for agricultural landowners who prefer them.

Construction on sections within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) will commence once the ALC issues a response to proceed. The rail trail partners are currently working with local farmers to finalize the crossing easement agreements.

In the meantime, work finalizing road crossings with the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, submitting environmental management plans, and conducting archaeological assessments is underway. Construction of the rail trail within Splat'sin IR#2 will commence early in 2025.

The Yucwmenlúcwu (Caretakers of the Land) team from Splat'sin Development Corporation will oversee project management and lead the construction of the Rail Trail. Lawson Engineering Ltd has been hired to provide engineering design and construction services.

“As a proud member and Kukpi7 of Splat'sin, it has been a tremendous honor to work alongside our partners in the creation of the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail,” said Splat'sin te Secwépemc Kukpi7 Michael Christian. “We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the progress of this project. A special thank you goes to the provincial and federal governments for their generous financial support. Kukstsemc!”



CSRD Board Vice-Chair Kevin Flynn, RDNO Board Chair Shirley Fowler, Splitsin te Secwépemc Kukpi7 Mike Christian, engineer Blake Lawson, Splitsin Development Corporation CEO Grahame Go, and Splitsin Yucwmenlúcwu (Caretakers of the Land) Construction Manager Jeromy Schuetze review plans for the next stages of rail trail construction in 2025.

“This trail symbolizes far more than just a pathway; it represents the power of partnership, the spirit of unity, and the promise of a vibrant future” said Shirley Fowler, Chair of the Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors. Thank you to the Splitsin, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and all those who have contributed their time, talents, and passion to bring this vision to life.”

“From the start, the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail has been about partnerships and collaboration. The tremendous value of this project has brought all levels of government and First Nations together to achieve this common goal. This project is building an exciting legacy of recreation and community spirit for our entire area,” said CSRD Board Vice-Chair Kevin Flynn.

In 2023, the Enderby-Splitsin pilot section (km 35.8-37.8) was completed with funding support from the Thompson-Okanagan Tourism Association, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport, and the Federal/Provincial Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program - COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure



Stream. Additionally, two sections (km 0.5-4.5 and km 49.15-50.4) are nearing completion with support from the BC Active Transportation grant program, matching funds from CSR and RDNO rail trail reserves, and contributions from the District of Sicamous and CSR Area E Economic Opportunities Fund.

A community-led fundraising campaign helped to lay the foundation for these grants with support from the Shuswap Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of the North Okanagan. Many individuals and businesses throughout the Shuswap and North Okanagan donated to the rail trail project including major contributions from Askews Foods, SASCU, and the Rotary Club of Salmon Arm. The funds are in turn leveraged to apply for grant funding multiplying the impact of every dollar raised.



The Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail pilot section in Enderby, BC showcases the future rail trail being built between Sicamous and Armstrong.

In 2015, Splat'sin te Secwépemc acquired two sections of the Rail Trail, and in 2018, the Province of British Columbia provided funding to assist RDNO and CSR in purchasing the remaining portion of the abandoned rail trail corridor. Additionally, development planning funds were secured through the BC Rural Development Program, with matching contributions from the District of Sicamous and the CSR Area E Economic Opportunities Fund.

Once the 42.6 km section is completed, the final step for the Rail Trail partners will be securing funding for the design and construction of a pedestrian and bicycle overpass across Highway 97A, as well as the adjacent trail north of Armstrong (km 42.6 to km 49.15). The partners aim to finish this final segment within the next three years.



A new community campaign to finish the trail will launch in 2025. The Community Fundraising Campaign encourages corporate and community donors to support the rail trail project by making donations, as many grants require a matching financial commitment to qualify. All contributions are tax-deductible; every dollar donated gets leveraged for grants and becomes more trail on the ground.

To stay updated on the progress of the Rail Trail or to donate, visit www.shuswapnorthokanaganrailtrail.ca.

For media inquiries, please contact:
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Splat'sin te Secwépemc Kukpi7 Mike Christian, RDNO Board Chair Shirley Fowler, CSRD Board Vice-Chair Kevin Flynn with MLA David Williams and elected representatives from the rail trail interjurisdictional partners gather on site with the Yucwmenlúcwu (Caretakers of the Land) team from Splat'sin Development Corporation, Lawson Engineering, and members of the rail trail technical operational committee to review plans for the next stages of rail trail construction in 2025. Splat'sin Kukpi7 Christian spoke about the importance of the rail trail in building relationships between the communities and partnering with Splat'sin to take care of the land.