The Shuswap TRAIL ALLIANCE

The Shuswap Trail Alliance: Background Brief

May 02, 2012

The Shuswap Trail Strategy. . .

Weaving the Shuswap green for generations – in a spirit of respect, cooperation, and stewardship

The Shuswap Trail Strategy is a regional multi-stakeholder initiative working to establish the entire Shuswap watershed as a united destination trail center known for its active lifestyle, vibrant culture, natural beauty, and commitment to sustainable ecology. It acknowledges that well designed, signed, maintained, and promoted, a trail network is an asset of significant economic value.

The Shuswap Trail Alliance was formed in 2005 as the organizational body through which local and regional leadership work together to develop and implement the Shuswap Trail Strategy – as First Nations, government, business, and community stewardship organizations and individuals.

A 2-year feasibility study and regional consultation was completed in 2006, and a strategic business plan was completed in November 2007 to guide the direction of the Alliance. A major regional effort to revise the trails strategy as part of a wider recreational access management plan is currently underway in partnership with the Lakes Division of the Secwepemc First Nation. (The Shuswap Trails Protocol)

Since 2006, trail routes, signage, educational materials, guides, maps, and supporting services have been developed to encourage healthy, active lifestyle choices; profile local heritage and culture (with a priority on developing trails in partnership with the Secwepemc First Nation); increase opportunities for outdoor non-motorized recreational travel; build new opportunities for environmental education and ecological encounter; and establish a new driver of sustainable economic opportunity.

Simply put: the Shuswap Trail Alliance is working to park cars and get people outside, mobile, and active – engaged with their communities and the natural world.

The five core service areas of the Shuswap Trail Alliance are:

✓ Regional Collaboration, ✓ Environmental Adaptive Planning, ✓ Trail Stewardship,
✓ Experience Development, and ✓ Capital Trail Development.

A priority for the Alliance is the creation of purpose built, sanctioned, and sustainable non-motorized greenway trails. A collaborative approach with motorized trail users has been taken, however, particularly in regard to regional strategic trail planning and management. Through the Alliance, trails are now authorized and built to best practices in sustainable design using the provincially endorsed IMBA/Whistler Standards.

The Shuswap Trail Alliance has also taken a combined infrastructure/education/marketing approach to growing a true trails community, believing a trail is only as good as it is used and cared for. The Alliance is working in partnership with Shuswap Tourism and other regional organizations to promote the Shuswap as an emerging destination trails centre for hike, mountain bike, Equestrian, Nordic, and paddle trail experiences within British Columbia. To this end, the Alliance is proud to be collaborating with Shuswap Tourism, Thompson Rivers University's School of Tourism, the REDTREE Rural Tourism Project, the Provincial Mountain Bike Tourism strategy, and as a regional committee member of the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC.

– Well-designed, well-signed, well maintained, well promoted –

Shuswap Trail Milestones to Date

Using a collaborative model that involves the commitment of local government and stewardship organizations, the Shuswap Trail Alliance has developed the organizational leadership and technical knowledge required to build and maintain a sustainable, world class trail network throughout the region. (continued p. 2. . .)

The Shuswap TRAIL ALLIANCE

The Shuswap Trail Alliance effort has engaged the respect and support of more than 200 groups, organizations and businesses; completed a year and a half feasibility, research, planning, and mobilization process; developed a long range Strategic Plan; translated the strategic plan into annual strategic work plans; and successfully coordinated seven years of on-the-ground trail development projects.

Since 2006, the Trail Alliance has worked with regional partners to accomplish:

- 58 completed greenway trail projects valued at more than $1.2 million in amenity assets
- 45 documented studies, publications, guidelines, and subsidized community trail plans
- 7 signature trail systems, 19 trails, 7 major upgrades, over 200 signs, and 3500 blazes
- Totalling over 70 km of new trails impacting 12 communities throughout the Shuswap
- 3 major stewardship plans, 7 adaptive environmental plans, 1 strategic business plan
- Creation of the environmental adaptive trail monitoring program
- A facilitated community-development model for collaboration (being copied by others)
- Development of accountable working protocols with Secwepemc Nation leadership
- Research and development of regional trail, sign, and environmental design standards
- collaboration with Shuswap Tourism on destination marketing and development
- Unprecedented provincial attention as an emerging leader in regional development
- Leveraged National and International film and magazine media exposure for the region
- Doubled every local dollar raised with matching grant investments
- Doubled every dollar invested with matching in-kind investment
- $1,500,000 in leveraged cash investments distributed throughout eight regional communities, including over $100,000 raised at the February Fundraiser since 2007
- $1,500,000 in local community in-kind investment and leadership
- more than 50 volunteer trail building events totalling 5000 hours' worth over $75,000
- assembled equipment valued at over $55,000 to support future volunteer trail work
- local employment and work experience training for over 70 people since 2006
- over 200 local business sponsors (includes 15 milestone partners donating $10,000+)
- Establishment of www.shuswaptrails.com as the regional online trails guide
- Fifth edition printing of the Shuswap Trails guide with Shuswap Tourism
- Launch of the Fall Hiking, Routes and Blues, and Winter Big Foot interpretive programs
- And leadership training for experiential eco-tourism and ecological education

See: www.shuswaptrailalliance.com

Partners and Sponsors

The Shuswap Trail Alliance acknowledges the support of Western Economic Diversification Canada, Services Canada, the Province of British Columbia, the Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Shuswap Tourism, the City of Salmon Arm, the District of Sicamous, Salmon Arm Savings and Credit Union, the Rotary Club of Salmon Arm, Community Futures Development Corporation, Thompson Rivers University School of Tourism, Skookum Cycle and Ski, Waterways Houseboats, Twin Anchors Houseboats, Mountain Equipment Coop, BC Parks Community Legacy Fund, Shuswap Lady Striders, the Shuswap Community Foundation's Browne Johnson Legacy Fund, over 200 regional businesses, and the 100s of individuals and volunteers from around the Shuswap who have helped to make our communities healthier places to live.

New investing partners are being sought to advance the Shuswap Trail strategy into 2012 and beyond.

Prepared by: Phil McIntyre-Paul for the Shuswap Trail Alliance.
250-832-0102/ phil@shuswaptrails.com / Visit www.shuswaptrailalliance.com