

The Shuswap Trail Alliance: Background Brief

February 14, 2017

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, Provincial and local governments, 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 update the trails strategy as part of a wider recreational access management plan was completed in December 2015 in partnership with the Lakes Division of the Secwepemc First Nation. It includes the creation of a region-wide leadership Roundtable to guide future trail planning. (See: The Shuswap Trails Strategy, vs. Nov. 2016)

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 access 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 collaborate with Shuswap Tourism, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, 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 First Nations, 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.

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12 Successful Years. . .

The Shuswap Trail Alliance has taken on over 270 projects in the past twelve years, and written or contributed to 80 community trail plans, publications, guidelines, research reports and public documents. It's a team effort that has engaged over 200 groups, organizations and businesses; and involves 1000's of hours of volunteer time and the incredible support of a host of regional partners and sponsors. Here's a snapshot:

- Over 270 greenway trail projects valued at more than \$2.11 million in amenity assets
- 80 documented studies, publications, guidelines, and subsidized community trail plans
- 11 signature trail systems, 100 regional trails, 9 major upgrades, over 1100 signs, and 5500 route blazes
- Totalling over 110 km of new trails impacting 12 communities throughout the Shuswap
- 6 major stewardship plans, 10 adaptive environmental plans, 1 strategic business plan
- Creation of the environmental adaptive trail monitoring program (T.E.S.T.)
- 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
- Over \$2,250,000 in leveraged cash investments distributed throughout nine regional communities, including over \$240,000 raised at the February Fundraiser since 2007
- Plus an additional matching \$1,930,000 in local community in-kind investment and leadership
- Creation of the regional Trail Stewardship Program and trailreport@shuswaptrails.com hotline
- More than 270 volunteer trail stewardship events totalling 18,000 hours valued at over \$300,000
- Assembled equipment valued at over \$40,000 to support future volunteer trail work
- Local employment and work experience training for over 100 people since 2006
- Over 200 local business sponsors (includes 30 milestone partners donating over \$10,000+ each)
- Establishment of www.shuswaptrails.com as the regional online trails guide
- Sixth edition printing of the Shuswap Trails guide with Shuswap Tourism
- Support for the Shuswap Outdoor Learning Foundation, TrailRider, and Trail Mix Art programs
- And leadership support for experiential eco-tourism, ecological education, active transportation, recreation, and healthy community planning

The Shuswap Trail Alliance was recognized as the 2012 BC Parks Volunteer Organization of the Year, and is a recipient of the Queens Diamond Jubilee Award.

Partners and Sponsors

The Shuswap Trail Alliance acknowledges the Milestone contributions (\$10,000 or more) of Western Economic Diversification Canada, Services Canada, the National Trail Coalition Federal Trail Fund, the Province of British Columbia including Recreation Sites and Trails BC and BC Parks, the Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Areas C, D, E, & F, the City of Salmon Arm, the District of Sicamous, North Okanagan Regional District Area F, the City of Enderby, the Village of Chase, Shuswap Tourism, Salmon Arm Savings and Credit Union, the Rotary Club of Salmon Arm, Community Futures Shuswap, Thompson Rivers University, the Shuswap Community Foundation, BC Healthy Communities, Shuswap Lady Striders, Backcountry Horsemen of BC, Mountain Equipment Coop, BC Parks Community Legacy Fund, over 200 regional businesses including Skookum Cycle and Ski, Waterways Houseboats, Twin Anchors Houseboats, Lakeside Insurance, EZ Rock Radio, the Salmon Arm Observer, Stella-Jones, and Tim Hortons, and the 100s of individuals and volunteers from around the Shuswap who are helping to make our communities healthier places to live.

Visit www.shuswaptrailalliance.com / 250-832-0102/ info@shuswaptrails.com