



POWELL RIVER FORESTRY HERITAGE SOCIETY (PRFHS)

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WILLINGDON BEACH TRAIL MANAGEMENT TRANSITION – September 2, 2022

After 100 years of involvement by volunteers maintaining the historic Willingdon Beach Trail, the PRFHS regrets to report that it will not be participating when the trail re-opens later in 2022, following the installation of the wastewater treatment pipes and resurfacing of the trail.

From time immemorial, Tla'amin people used and maintained the trail (or land very close to it) to get from tiskʷat (the Townsite) to ʔahʔjumixʷ (Willingdon Beach), another Tla'amin village. It has been a privilege for us descendants of the “settler” community to carry on this activity.

The current trail was created when a logging railroad was built there in 1910. Shortly after the railroad ceased operation in 1923, volunteers got the ties lifted so the trail could be used as a biking and walking trail to the Townsite from Westview. Various sets of volunteers continued this work until the Forestry Museum Society was formed in 1985 and its members undertook the WB trail work. The Society struck an agreement with Macmillan Bloedel, then the owners of the land, to maintain the trail and use it as a showcase for logging equipment. In addition to installing logging artifacts along the trail, interpretive signs were provided, danger trees felled, culverts dug, branches removed, ditches cleared, garbage removed, and the surface re-gravelled as needed over the years. The Society continued these arrangements through a succession of land owners until the City obtained land title in 2010 as part of Millennium Park.

Since 2010, City Parks has taken on a steadily increasing set of maintenance tasks for the Trail, to the point where the Forestry Heritage Society now does a small part of the work. The artifacts along the trail, donated to the community by individuals and companies, now form an integral part of the land and trail.

Major changes to the trail are occurring with the installation of the wastewater treatment mainline. All the culverts have to be removed and will be replaced wherever needed to handle the new water run-off patterns. Some artifacts and interpretive signs have to be moved, and some are ready for painting or repair. Rather than have the decreasing number of PRFHS volunteers get involved with the revised trail in this City Park, the time seems right to turn over the full set of maintenance responsibilities to the City, whose Parks Department does a terrific job of keeping our parks looking good.

We hope the City is able to find the additional resources, perhaps with participation by some other local volunteer group, to replace the role undertaken in the past by the PRFHS. If a self-contained set of volunteers came forward to join PRFHS and do the work, we would welcome that and offer to the City that we continue, but that is unlikely to happen in this age of declining volunteerism.

From the hundreds of Forestry Museum and Forestry Heritage Society volunteers who have participated in the Willingdon Beach Trail development and maintenance activity over the past 37 years: Thank you, Powell River people and businesses, for your support of the historic Willingdon Beach Trail!

And to City Parks: Thank you for your excellent co-management of the trail over the past 12 years, and good luck with having it looked after in the future!

Need further information? Contact Dave Florence, President, PRFHS, 604-413-1224