



ROSE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK TRAILS MASTER PLAN SURVEY BACKGROUNDER MARCH 2022

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



Territory Acknowledgement

The RDCO acknowledges that Rose Valley Regional Park is on the traditional and unceded territory of syilx Okanagan people.

Government-to-government discussion and review of the Trails Master Plan with the Westbank First Nation is integral to the planning process and the goal of respecting their cultural heritage within the Park.

Background

Rose Valley Regional Park is a popular outdoor recreation area in the Central Okanagan managed by the Regional District of the Central Okanagan (RDCO). It offers a variety of trails for hiking, walking, running, and mountain biking for all skill and fitness levels. With the rapid increase in public use of the trails in recent years and the presence of unsanctioned trails throughout the Park, the RDCO identified a need to create a Trails Master Plan to provide clear guidelines and tools to improve the trail system, preserve important environmental values, and ensure that the trail network is accessible, fun, and sustainable.

The following has been prepared by Brent Harley and Associates (BHA) and Cabin Resource Management (Cabin) to provide the public with background on the project and a summary of the work completed to-date as a complement to the Trail User Survey. Those interested can also follow the projects' progress at yoursay.rdco.com.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Trails Master Plan is:

To create an improved trail system that balances recreation and ecological values in the Park, while respecting First Nations cultural heritage.

Supporting this goal are several key objectives:

- Address Unsustainable Trails

The Trail Master Plan will identify unsustainable trails and recommend options to re-route, decommission, or improve these trails. Unsustainable trails include those crossing into environmentally sensitive areas, directly or indirectly damaging important wildlife habitat, or those subject to rapid, unavoidable, and significant. The trails identified for decommissioning will be restored based on the principles of ecological restoration.

- Net Zero Trail Development

The Trail Master Plan will balance the removal of existing unsustainable trails with the addition of new sustainable trails, so there is a net zero change in the level of disturbance, overall length of trails, and an improvement to the environmental values in the Park. If a section of trail is decommissioned, a trail of similar capacity, designation, and difficulty should be created as a replacement. This is a response to the increasing trail use, unauthorized trail development, a need to preserve and restore ecologically sensitive areas, and maintain a high-quality recreation experience.

- Government-to-Government Discussion with Westbank First Nation

All aspects of the Trails Master Plan, including the trail assessment, potential trail changes, and recommendations, will be reviewed and discussed with the Westbank First Nation (WFN) to address concerns and integrate their values, goals, and objectives for the area, as provided by WFN.

- Comprehensive Stakeholder and Public Engagement

The planning process will complete a comprehensive, accessible, and inclusive stakeholder and public engagement process including online survey, interactive maps, and virtual stakeholder sessions to solicit trail user feedback on the trail network and inform the Trails Master Plan.

Planning Approach

To initiate the project, through Fall 2021 BHA and Cabin undertook a desktop analysis of Provincial trails, wildlife, ecological spatial data, and a biophysical inventory and assessment by Ecoscape Environmental Consultants Ltd. (2011). This was complemented by field assessments completed by Cabin. Maps were then developed that identify all existing trails and associated infrastructure, as well as critical wildlife habitat and ecological features.

The RDCO then presented the existing conditions, site analyses, and preliminary concepts to the Westbank First Nation (WFN) for their review. The RDCO will continue to maintain active communication with WFN throughout the planning process, seeking their guidance on and ultimate approval of the Trails Master Plan to ensure their cultural heritage is preserved.

Currently the project team is proceeding through a thorough stakeholder and public engagement program, of which the Trail User Survey is the key element. The feedback collected through the Survey will be critical to the creation of the Trails Master Plan.

The final Trails Master Plan will include the desktop analyses, assessment of the trails and their current conditions, recommendations for proposed trail re-routes, modifications, closures/rehabilitation, maintenance plans, the addition of proposed new trails, and an implementation strategy, with long-term phasing and cost estimates for maintenance and improvements.

The Trails Master Plan will provide the strategy and framework to create and maintain positive recreation experiences in Rose Valley Regional Park, while protecting sensitive ecosystems and preserving cultural heritage of the Westbank First Nation. It will allow the RDCO and their community partners to manage and coordinate the phased improvement of the trail network well into the future.

Next Steps

Once you have read this Survey Backgrounder and become familiar with the work completed (e.g., site analyses, preliminary concepts), we ask that you:

1. Complete the Online Survey ([Link](#)).
2. Review and Comment on the Interactive 3D Map of the Trail Network (accessed through the Online Survey).
3. Forward any Additional Questions or Comments to parks.planning@rdco.com.

Stakeholder and public feedback will be critically important to the development of the Trails Master Plan, which is expected to be finalized later in 2022. Those interested can keep up to date with the latest progress of the Trails Master Plan by visiting yoursay.rdco.com

Thank you for your time and thoughtful feedback!