

**November 1, 2022**

## **Walk Around Lake Country volunteers create interactive map of local trails**

**Lake Country, BC - Local volunteers, the District of Lake Country, a federal grant and Lake Country Rotary funds create a legacy of wayfinding and accessibility for community trails.**

Thanks to a \$98,050 Canada Healthy Communities Initiative grant and funds from the Lake Country Rotary Club, Walk Around Lake Country (WALC) trail planners and builders have been busy working with the District of Lake Country over the past year to improve trail wayfinding in and around Lake Country. The project included trail upgrades, decommissioning of excess trails, installation of signage, creation of paper maps and an on-line map tool. WALC and the District of Lake Country are grateful for the support from the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative as it will make finding and navigating District of Lake Country trails easier.

“The Government of Canada is pleased to support the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative with projects across the country that build more inclusive communities and ensure a higher quality of life for Canadians. The ‘Walk Around the Lake Country’ project announced today will provide the community of the District of Lake Country the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors while keeping safe and healthy,” said the Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, on behalf of the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities.

“We hope that the development and marking of a wide variety of trails will encourage and support more people being active and enjoying our truly beautiful community,” said outgoing Mayor James Baker.

For over 10 years, Rotary has financially supported WALC and worked together, along with the District, to improve the trails and public spaces in Lake Country with a focus on safety, accessibility and wayfinding. This history of shared community projects likely facilitated the federal grant. “Rotary is pleased to support projects like this one, making trails in our community safer and accessible to more people more often,” said Lake Country Rotary Club President, Kathryn Battrum.

Jack Seaton Park has been the focus of much of the physical trail work: gravel surfacing and the installation of kiosks, trailhead signs and trail markers were funded by the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative grant. \$20,000 from the Lake Country Rotary Club was used for two aspects of the project. An improved crossing was installed over marsh drainage to facilitate safety and protect the surrounding natural areas. These funds also supported improvement to the surface and grades on the Marsh Loop Trail, increasing accessibility for people with strollers, walkers, wheelchairs and smaller-wheeled bikes. More people can now enjoy the natural environment and beauty in this area. Some trails within Jack Seaton Park have been decommissioned to allow the overused forested areas to rejuvenate. Material that might

otherwise have been discarded as part of the project was used for the decommissioning, reducing waste and retaining naturally occurring vegetation. It is hoped that by providing walkers with well-marked trails, future damage will be kept to a minimum.

“This project started with hundreds of hours of volunteer time, identifying, describing, and photographing every trail in Lake Country. Once inventoried, we worked with District staff and software designers to ensure all trail details were correctly captured. Further volunteer hours were devoted to signage design and locations, working with District staff and project contractors. I am grateful to all the dedicated individuals who made this project a reality. This project aligned perfectly with WALC’s Mission Statement: ‘To develop and promote walking and hiking trails in and around the District of Lake Country’,” said Dev Fraser, spokesperson for WALC.

“Trails offer accessible and affordable opportunities for health and wellness, exploration and connectivity within neighbourhoods and the greater community,” said long time WALC member Elisabeth Dahnert. With the completion of this trail mapping and wayfinding initiative, it is hoped residents, newcomers and visitors will get out on the amazing trails Lake Country has to offer.

Check out the on-line tool at [www.lakecountry.bc.ca/maps/trails](http://www.lakecountry.bc.ca/maps/trails)

Paper map pamphlets that detail all of Lake Country’s trails will soon be available at the District office, 10150 Bottom Wood Lake Road, Lake Country. Look for wayfinding signs as you explore our community.

### **About the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative**

The Healthy Communities Initiative is a \$60 million investment from the Government of Canada to transform public spaces in response to COVID-19. The Healthy Communities Initiative will provide funding to a broad range of organizations including local governments, charities, Indigenous communities and nonprofits for projects, programming and services that help communities create safe and vibrant public spaces, improve mobility options and provide innovative digital solutions. For more information, visit: <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/chci-iccs/>

This Canada Healthy Communities Initiative project has six major components:

#### **Identification and rating of trails**

- 58 trails spanning a distance of 73 kms were identified, mapped, measured, named, described and photographed for this project
  - WALC has had a hand in developing over half of these trails
- A trail connection between Hare and Nighthawk Roads has been established this year

- Accurate identification of location, accessibility, grades, level of difficulty and amenities helps trail users make safe, informed decisions before heading out to hike, walk or bike

### **Accessibility**

- Reducing gradients, widening trails and providing surfaces suitable for all forms of wheeled mobility allows more people to access the natural environment and beauty of our trails and parks
- Improving drainage reduces erosion which can limit access

### **Kiosks, trailhead signs, trail markers**

- Wayfinding is a critical skill; signs provide information to make informed decisions
- Well designed signs and markers provide safety for all trail users
- Helps keep trail users on track, protecting the natural environment

### **Online map tool**

- Easily found on the District of Lake Country website [www.lakecountry.bc.ca/maps/trails](http://www.lakecountry.bc.ca/maps/trails)
- Can be easily updated for additions and, if needed, closures and trail conditions
- A map can be downloaded for ease of use

### **Paper maps**

- Promotes opportunities for visitors and residents
- Easier than an app for some trail users
- Will be updated as supplies are diminished

### **Decommissioning of trails**

- Encourages use of safe trails
- Protects natural environment from degradation and habitat loss
- Restores habitat for bio-diversity of native species
- Reduces unsustainable and duplicate trails
- Overall better trail-user experience

### **Lake Country Riders**

- While not a part of this project, Lake Country Riders have been busy building a trail network for family riders, including a moderate uphill track and three downhill tracks



