

The Shuswap Trail Alliance
PO Box 1531, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4P67
Phone: 250-832-0102, Email: admin@shuswaptrails.com
www.shuswaptrailalliance.com

Updated: June 24, 2014

PUBLIC CALL TO ACTION. . .

Please send expressions of support to your local Mayors, Councillors, Regional Directors, and MLA.

Questions for CP Rail can be directed to 1-800-766-7912 or community_connect@cpr.ca

. . . and also send copies of your correspondence to:
The Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail Initiative
c/o The Shuswap Trail Alliance at
admin@shuswaptrails.com (Phone 250-832-0102)

Shuswap/North Okanagan Rail Trail – Call to Action



Call to Action – Calling all governing leadership within the Shuswap/North Okanagan region to work together with Secwepemc and Provincial leadership, the Shuswap Trail Alliance, community leaders, organizations, and sponsoring partners to acquire the abandoned Sicamous to Armstrong rail corridor – establishing a continuous hiking/cycling greenway – and link it with the Central Okanagan Rail Trail!

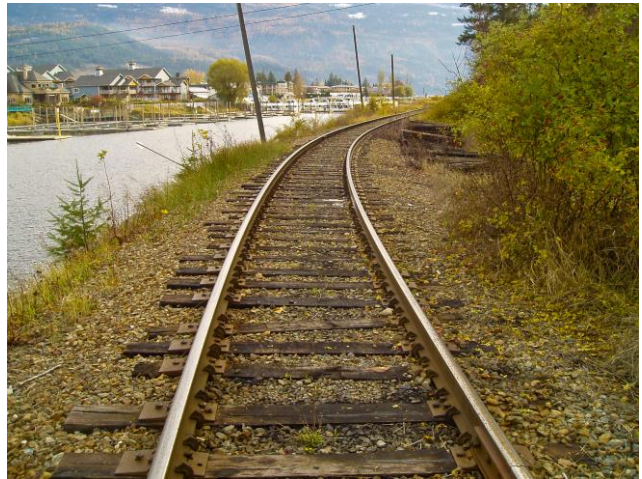
The Vision – a world-class continuous destination greenway corridor for cycling and hiking linking Sicamous to Armstrong . . . to Vernon . . . to Kelowna . . . to Osoyoos!

Rational – well designed, signed, maintained, and promoted studies show rail trail greenways create significant economic opportunity, improve property values, reduce damage to sensitive habitat, manage negative use, increase health benefits and cost savings, and attract new residents and visitors. (See the Okanagan Rail Trail Impact Assessment, May 2014)



Background – Discontinuation of the CP Rail line between Sicamous and Armstrong was announced in 2009 triggering a legal abandonment process that included a period where each level of government had an opportunity to purchase the line, after which the line would become available for private sale.

During the government bid period, Shuswap Trail Alliance leadership met with local leadership to advocate for acquisition and management of the rail corridor as a continuous greenway corridor. While regional visions for the future of the line varied, securing the corridor was consistently supported, and the concept of establishing some form of walking/cycling greenway in conjunction with the corridor was widely supported. (This even included consideration for a Rails-with-Trails concept should the Grindrod- Armstrong section remain active to continue rail service to Sure Crop Feeds.) The STA was directed to stand by while local governments worked to secure the corridor.



During this time, STA leadership also acknowledged Secwepemc title and right over the land which is within Secwepemc Nation territory. Secwepemc leadership from the Splatstin community are currently in negotiations with CP Rail. The STA is committed to ensure any effort to secure a greenway corridor support these negotiations.

All municipal and regional Official Community Plans that encompass the Sicamous-to-Armstrong rail line currently zone the rail corridor as a connected transportation right of way. As well, several community plans identify the desire to establish a corridor for walking and cycling along the abandoned line, including community input during the Enderby-Splatstin Active Transportation Planning workshops.

Unfortunately, while we understand attempts were made, no government acquisition bids were successfully negotiated during this period (2010 – 2014). So the land will now be made available for private purchase once Splatstin concludes their negotiations with CP Rail (expected to be announced shortly). As a result, salvage operations of the rails commenced in April of this year.

More recently, another section of rail corridor has been decommissioned in the Central Okanagan, and as of June this year, entered the government bid phase. This line is owned by CN Rail. Perhaps taking notes from the failed attempts to secure the line by local governments in our area, advocates in the Central Okanagan formed a non-profit society purposely to rally public support and lobby local government and provincial leadership to adopt a rail-trail strategy and work together to acquire the line.

The resulting lobby to secure the Central Okanagan corridor – which included support from many in the Shuswap/North Okanagan – proved to be very successful, resulting in public statements of support for the vision by municipal and provincial leadership. (See www.okanaganrailtrail.ca)

This has had a spin-off effect of raising the profile of the abandoned CP rail corridor in our area, and triggering increased public query and support. Combined with the visibility of the rail line being salvaged, the Shuswap Trail Alliance has received unprecedented daily email and phone messages in support of ensuring the northern rail line will be turned into a greenway trail for walking and cycling.

The Shuswap TRAIL ALLIANCE

Economics – The Central Okanagan Rail-Trail initiative was also successful in securing funds to contract an economic feasibility impact study which found a Rail Trail corridor would generate substantial economic spending, employment, and property value benefits. It acknowledges the magnified advantage of linking the Central Okanagan Rail Trail into a united rail-trail corridor with the existing rail trail to Osoyoos in the South, and the abandoned Sicamous-to-Armstrong CP rail line in the North. This matches the original Shuswap Trail vision of an inter-regional greenway trail corridor linked with the Okanagan. “Three sections; one bigger vision!”



Current Status and Options – Our local governments were unsuccessful in assembling a working proposal during the government bid period. Splantsin leadership is currently completing negotiations with CP Rail based on Secwepemc title & right. Once these agreements have been finalized, the remaining lands within the corridor will be turned over to CP’s Real Estate Division for private sale.

This essentially leaves purchasing through CP’s Real Estate division as the remaining option to secure the corridor for the future benefit and use of the public and ensure this remarkable opportunity is not lost:

➔ **Call to Action** – **local governments work together** with Secwepemc and Provincial leadership, the Shuswap Trail Alliance, community leaders, organizations, and sponsoring partners to assemble a financing strategy with leveraged partnership investment (ideally from combined provincial, federal, local government, and community/business sponsorship) and submit a bid to purchase.

Management Priorities – a greenway strategy for the rail corridor must address the following. . .

1. acknowledgement of Secwepemc territory title & rights, and support for Splantsin negotiations
2. protection of sensitive habitat and cultural sites,
3. prevention of unwanted use/damage/garbage/noise for adjacent property owners
4. option to use the corridor for potential sustainable transportation solutions in the future,
5. collaboration with Central Okanagan and South Okanagan to create a continuous greenway corridor for walking and cycling (rails-to-trails & rails-with-trails) – “Three sections; one vision”
6. organized working partnerships for the future management of the corridor

A Few Numbers –

- Length of the Sicamous to Armstrong rail-trail corridor = approx. 50 kilometers
- Length of potential greenway rail-trail from Sicamous to Osoyoos = approx. 282 kilometers
- Local government jurisdictions along the Sicamous – Armstrong Corridor: Splantsin (Secwepemc Nation), Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area E, North Okanagan Regional District Area F, District of Sicamous, Township of Spallumcheen, City of Enderby, City of Armstrong,
- Net land valuation of the CP Rail Line estimated at \$4.6 million (mile 0.3-16.4/net salvage = \$6.2m) and \$1.8 million (mile 16.4-31.63/net salvage = \$3.2m) (Canadian Transport Agency)
- Rail trail construction estimates – the 25 km asphalt surfaced North Star Rail Trail between Kimberly and Cranbrook reportedly cost approx. \$3 million (this did not include salvage costs)

➔ **Please send expressions of support to** your local Mayors, Councillors, Regional Directors, and MLA. Questions for CP Rail can be directed to 1-800-766-7912 or community_connect@cpr.ca

. . .and also send copies of your correspondence (and to be added to the contact list) to:

The Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail Initiative

c/o The Shuswap Trail Alliance at admin@shuswaptrails.com (Phone 250-832-0102)

The Shuswap
TRAIL ALLIANCE



Sicamous to Armstrong Rail Trail
(Abandoned CP Line) approx. 50 km

Armstrong to Vernon Proposed Rail-
with-Trail (CN Active) approx. 26 km

Vernon to Kelowna Proposed
Okanagan Rail Trail approx. 50 km

Proposed Connector approx. 20+ km

Kelowna to Osoyoos (Kettle Valley
Rail Trails) approx. 136 km