

November 6th, 2009

Cross Country Round Up

Every week the Regional Trails Coordinators and the National Coordinator for the National Trails Coalition participate in a conference call. This meeting is a very important tool for sharing information, problem solving and brain storming. Every meeting involves a little verbal report from each RTC and this was fondly nick named “The Cross Country Round Up!” The Round Up is the opportunity for each RTC to present their province or territory to the rest of the country. This communication fosters the relationships between each region and brings unity to our organization. All the representatives for the NTC share the common goal of improving existing trails and blazing new ones all across the country and they accomplish this by working with hundreds of different organizations and volunteers.

Following Proper Trail Etiquette

The Minimal Impact Approach

Keeping our trails healthy and beautiful is everybody’s business. So when using any of the beautiful trails across the country -- lead by example and take the minimal impact approach to trail use.

- * Leave flowers, wood, rocks and plants behind in their original setting for others to enjoy.
- * Avoid tree damage. Do not break branches or strip bark off trees. This leaves them susceptible to infestations and disease.
- * Leave the trails cleaner than you found them. Carry out all litter and feel free to clean up litter that is not yours.

* Do not build fire rings or have open fires along the trails. They are not permitted except in approved campsites.

*Do not build structures, furniture or dig trenches. Instead, please contact your local volunteer trail organization and offer to help.

PROJECT PROFILE

Alberta's Iron Horse Trail

Back around 1980 CN rail service halted between Elk Point and Heinsburg. The remaining rails were taken up and people began using the corridor as an informal trail. Several parts of this corridor were located on the historic Carlton Trail which was used to explore Western Canada in the 1700s and onward. Years later CN sold the corridor to the County of St. Paul. The county was initially interested in a lucrative gravel pit that was part of the deal. Trail users lobbied to have the corridor deemed a public trail and operated it on an informal basis.

The volunteers and municipal representatives worked very hard and tapped into provincial resources like Alberta TrailNet and the Alberta Snowmobile Association to learn all they could about trail building, maintenance and development. Once the corridor was brought up to a usable standard the Iron Horse Trail officially opened in 2003. Now this Trail is supported by 10 municipalities and is part of the Trans Canada Trail. Iron Horse offers 300KMs of trail ranging from boreal forest, parklands, and farmland. This four season trail area is enjoyed by snowmobile enthusiasts, nature lovers, bird watchers, hikers, ATV riders, dog sledgers, snowshoers, cross country skiers and horseback riders.



With the federal funding from Canada's Economic Action Plan in partnership with the National Trails Coalition, the Riverland Recreational Trail Society is now able to resurface 45 kilometres of Alberta's well utilized Iron Horse Trail from Heinsburg to



Armistice. Following a Surface Rehabilitation Study the organization has opted for a clay cap surface which is comprised of placing a 0.25 m clay cap on the existing surface, with 3:1 side slopes and includes 20% shrinkage for compaction. Also included in the project is subgrade shaping, leveling and compaction and two applications of traffic gravel. Some of the issues that will be rectified by this resurfacing include damaging erosion and washouts and collapsed culverts. The Iron Horse Trail

is a shining example of teamwork. The Riverland Recreational Trail Society is comprised of members from the local snowmobile, ATV and horse clubs throughout the region. Trail stewards from each of these organizations regularly patrol the trail looking for safety and maintenance issues. It has been this collaboration that keeps the trail operating smoothly and makes it a destination trail for thousands of people to enjoy wildlife, scenery, historic buildings and farmsteads. This is a little glimpse of the rich history that is Northeastern Alberta.