

All the Kinsol needs now is you

By Mike Damour - Cowichan News Leader Pictorial
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A refurbished Kinsol Trestle is getting closer and closer to becoming a reality, all that's missing is some public commitment to complete the project.

"We need about \$200,000 and that has to come from fundraising," said Janet Docherty, of the Kinsol Campaign Cabinet.

To that end, the Cabinet has launched its "A Twonie For the Trestle" campaign.

"Yes, we've all got different kinds of things we're giving money to and times are tough," said Docherty.

"But if we all pitch in a small way, we will make that difference and will save something for our community that will make a difference," she said.

While the campaign would love larger donations, Docherty said if everyone could toss even a twonie into the pot, the future of the largest wooden trestle in the Commonwealth would be assured.

"Once we get that money from the public, we will get matching funds from the provincial and federal governments," she said.

Those in the Cowichan will, over the next six months, see "lots of local, fun events" that people can get involved in, said Docherty.

"We want the community to feel like they can make a difference."

There are already plans for a dinner dance at Merridale Ciderworks, which Docherty owns.

"Many of the gifts received to date have been from foundations and larger corporate gifts," she said.

"We have now reached the stage in the campaign where there is a need to galvanize the local community to support the campaign with mid-sized and smaller gifts."

Western Forest Products has offered trees, which will be selected and cut at the company's sawmill. while the IWA is offering skilled labour.

It wasn't too long ago the 614-foot long, 145-foot high trestle was slated for demolition.

It took a plea from the public and some behind the scenes wrangling a couple of years ago to make sure the trestle, which has not seen a train for more than 30 years, will be preserved.

The \$6 million plans now include reinforcing the old bridge and to make a pathway atop it for hikers, cyclists and horseback riders.

"This is a piece that will never happen again, it's a piece of history and something in the backyard of this community people can be proud of," said Docherty.

"We can't just sit back and wait for the government to do this for us — this is really about trying to get to the spirit and hearts of the community."