

# CVRD, Town do Trans Canada Trail upgrades

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Workers are busy clearing bush and grooming ground in their attempt to complete a portion of the Trans-Canada Trail that will link Cowichan Lake to North Cowichan.

“Right now we’re busy undertaking the work this year and next year to link the Town of Lake Cowichan with Duncan and North Cowichan using the existing railway grade that is actually owned by the Island Corridor Foundation,” said Brian Farquhar, parks manager for the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

“It’s part of the old spur line that used to run up to the town (of Lake Cowichan) to the Honeymoon Bay area and Mesachie Lake.”

The work is concentrating on 26-kilometres of trail at a cost of about \$340,000 in grant money from Island Coastal Economic Trust, regional parks funding, federal gas tax funding and from Cowichan Tribes

“We started some initial clearing back in May and we’re just now finalizing details in terms of the culverts and grading and everything else,” said Farquhar.

The CVRD’s work complements that of Lake Cowichan’s, which is also widening the portion of the trail that slices through the middle of town and putting down a special gravel.

The town is using the second installment of federal-provincial tourism money, \$25,725, for some trail upgrades of its own, including S-gates to help keep dirt bikes and ATVs off the trail.

There are now two branches of the Trans Canada Trail that converge in Lake Cowichan on the old rail rights-of-way.

The south branch of the trail is the old CN Rail line that once stretched all the way to Youbou.

The north branch is the old CP Rail line, which became available with the transfer of the E&N Rail to the Island Corridor Foundation. The western terminus of the trail is in Lake Cowichan, with a special kiosk located at the west end of Wellington Road.

Farquhar said the current work linking the trail from Sherman Road on the North Cowichan end to Greendale Road at the east end of Lake Cowichan is one of several elements the CVRD is working on over the next three years to complete the link from Lake Cowichan up to Nanaimo regional district’s Trans-Canada Trail, north of Ladysmith.

“With the improvements we’re doing now you’ll be able to go from the old CNR rail line, which is our Cowichan Valley Trail, onto the old E&N spur to come back to Duncan-North Cowichan on the north side of the river,” Farquhar said.

“And from just north of Duncan where the rail line comes back it will use existing portions of the active E&N rail right of way, which is 100-feet wide with the tracks right down the middle.”

The overall objective is to have everything — including the Kinsol Trestle (a link in the Trans-Canada Trail) and the connection with Victoria’s Galloping Goose Trail — substantially completed by 2012.

***With a file from Doug Marner.***