

# Collecting our Kinsol Trestle memories

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The Kinsol Trestle has inspired and awed people for years and spawned many memories and stories.

Earlier this month, construction finally began on the long-anticipated rehabilitation of the Trestle so that future generations will be able to enjoy it for many more years to come, as people did in the past.

But while the Kinsol has often been in the news since the last train crossed the historic structure back in 1975, what most people know about the Kinsol comes from the on again off again efforts to save or demolish it.

"We don't have that many real stories about the Kinsol Trestle -- especially from those people who actually used it and worked on it every day," says Kathryn Gagnon, the curator of the Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives.

Construction on the Kinsol Trestle Rehabilitation project got underway earlier this month. Donations can be made online at [kinsol.ca](http://kinsol.ca) or by phone at 250-709-1087. The grand reopening of the Kinsol Trestle is set for early summer 2011.

Although the structure is now well known in the Cowichan Valley area, for most of its life, it was just another trestle on a small logging railway, ferrying lumber from the forest to the mills, she says.

"Most people never saw it and probably had never heard of it," she says.

Four years ago, Gagnon organized an exhibit about the imminent demolition of the Trestle called "Kinsol in Crisis" at the Cowichan Valley Museum. And while she's proud of the display they put together, she wants to build a better historical record of the stories and artifacts about the Kinsol Trestle.

So this past spring, Gagnon teamed up with Lori Treloar, curator of the Shawnigan Lake Museum to receive a \$5,000 grant from Canadian Heritage to create a Virtual Museum of Canada online exhibit.

"It's going to be called "The Kinsol Trestle: Abandoned, Then Embraced," and it will be part of the Community Memories Program on the Canadian Heritage Information Network's website," says Gagnon.

"We're looking for stories and artifacts from people all over the Cowichan Valley area. It might be a story about seeing the train cross the Trestle in the early days. Or perhaps they had a relative who worked in the area.

"People have told me they have old photos of the Kinsol Trestle at home.

"I hope they'll go through their own archives and share anything they may have."

For more information visit the Cowichan Valley Museum website or the Shawnigan Lake Museum website.