

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Trail project completion strengthens Cowichan community connections

**Duncan, BC:** The Cowichan Valley Trail is now another step closer to becoming a continuous 120-kilometre non-motorized multi-use trail across the region.

Following an opening event today, the 4.3 km Saltair Rail with Trail Project was officially completed, connecting the communities of Ladysmith, Saltair and Chemainus with a three-metre-wide compacted gravel surface that is gently-graded and suitable for walking, cycling and equestrian use.

“Our region continues to make strides towards becoming one of the most livable areas in Canada, and this section of trail is a prime example of how we’re contributing to that reputation,” said Ian Morrison, Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “We’re thankful for the support we received from our funding partners to make this project possible, and that of our communities to fulfill the vision of creating a fully integrated piece of The Great Trail.”

The newly completed route includes a stunning 27-metre single-span bridge across Stocking Creek and scenic views of Mount Brenton to west and the Gulf Islands to the east. As the trail passes through Saltair, side trips for hiking into Stocking Creek Park are readily accessible, where users can view the park waterfall and stroll alongside the creek before continuing back on to the Cowichan Valley Trail.

“We’re thrilled to have supported the development of the Saltair Rail with Trail project,” said Trisha Kaplan, Trail Development Manager, Western and Northern Canada at Trans Canada Trail. “The Cowichan Valley is an iconic destination, and we believe projects like this make the Trail here even more enjoyable.”

The Cowichan Valley Trail is part of The Great Trail, the coast-to-coast-to-coast trail network that links communities across Canada, inclusive of the 200 km route on Southern Vancouver Island that begins in Victoria and concludes at the BC Ferries’ Departure Bay terminal Nanaimo. The Ladysmith-Saltair-Chemainus section of the Cowichan Valley Trail was possible through financial contributions from the Federal Gas Tax Fund Program, Province of British Columbia (Bike BC & Provincial Rural Dividend Fund), Trans Canada Trails, Mosaic Forest Management and private donations.

“This tranche of The Great Trail is part of our multi-year commitment to build recreational access opportunities in and around our operating areas on Vancouver Island,” said Jeff Zweig, President & CEO of Mosaic Forest Management, timberland manager for TimberWest and Island Timberlands. “We are proud to work with our partners to develop this world class trail through the simply stunning natural beauty of the Cowichan Valley.”

One final gap of just over 12 km remains in the Cowichan Valley Trail to bring the entire network to completion, from just south of Chemainus to Highway 18 near Somenos Road. Overall plans are in place for this trail section with the CVRD committed to pursuing funding and partners to see

this final section of trail built, realizing The Great Trail's vision of communities connected both in the Cowichan region and across Canada.

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