

# NEWS RELEASE

September 18, 2025



*Cyclists enjoy the new rail trail section opened between km 0.5 in Sicamous and km 14.8 at the southern end of Mara Lake.*

## **Ribbon Cutting Reopens Mara Lake Section of the Splatsin te Secwépemc / Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail**

**Community celebrates with ferry shuttles from downtown Sicamous.**

**ENDERBY & SICAMOUS, B.C.** — Rail Trail partners celebrated another milestone reopening the Splatsin te Secwépemc / Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail along Mara Lake with a ribbon-cutting event to acknowledge all the partners who have made opening this section possible.

The celebration took place Wednesday, September 10, with the Sicamous Ferry Society providing shuttle service across the Narrows from downtown Sicamous to the ribbon-cutting site at KM 0.5. A *Ribbon Cutting Reopens Mara Lake Section of the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail*

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reception luncheon followed at the Sek'emaws Health Centre in Sicamous hosted by leadership from Sicamous Economic Development and the Sicamous Ferry Society.

Splatsin te Secwépemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Michael Christian opened the event with a welcome message and acknowledgements, setting a strong and respectful tone for the day. He was joined by regional leaders including Columbia Shuswap Regional District Chair Melnychuk, Regional District of North Okanagan Chair Fowler, District of Sicamous Mayor Colleen Anderson, CSR D Area E Director Rhona Martin, RDNO Area F Director Alyssa Hopkins, and other representatives including the MLA's office and greetings from the MP's office and the Government of Canada. The Sicamous Ferry Society and Sicamous Economic Development also addressed the crowd, reflecting the collaborative spirit making the Rail Trail possible.

"Today's ribbon cutting is another important milestone for the Splatsin te Secwépemc and our neighbours," said Kukpi7 (Chief) Michael Christian. "Each section we open reconnects communities to one another and to the land, and shows what we can accomplish when First Nations, local governments, volunteers, and donors work together in a good way. Kukwstsetsemc (thank you) to all our partners for helping make this possible. We look forward to completing the full corridor so families can walk and ride safely while we continue to care for Secwépemcúl'ecw."

"This is truly an opportunity for us to cross jurisdictional lines and to show what it's like to build relationship in a good way," said CSR D Chair Natalya Melnychuk. "It's a positive project that can show that we are moving towards friendly neighbourly relations and our reconciliation goals."

"This trail invites us to walk, cycle, and explore together", stated Shirley Fowler, Chair of the RDNO Board of Directors. "It promotes healthy living, protects our environment, and celebrates the rich cultural and agricultural heritage of this region. It's a place where we can slow down, reconnect with nature, and appreciate the land we share."

The latest section of the rail trail to open was made possible through an Active Transportation Funding (ATF) contribution agreement between Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada and the Splatsin te Secwépemc. The funds were used to complete trail surfacing between km 4.5 and 14.8 Over the next year, this funding will also assist in completing an additional 20 kilometers south of Mara Lake.

The Honourable Stephen Fuhr, Secretary of State (Defence Procurement), and Member of Parliament for Kelowna, sent greetings to the gathering stating he wished he could be there. "Our government is proud to support the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail, and active transportation projects across the country, to connect our communities, provide access to nature and encourage active commutes."

Additional funding support came from the Provincial BC Active Transportation program and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Electoral Area E/ District of Sicamous Economic Opportunity Fund.



These funds completed the section between km 0.5 and 4.5. And the support of 100s of individual and business donors was recognized, including Askews Foods, SASCU, and the Rotary Club of Salmon Arm.

The efforts of Sicamous community leaders were acknowledged during the event. The innovative formation of the Sicamous Ferry Society has allowed access to the trail while the Highway 1 Bruhn Bridge is constructed. The ferry was made possible with support from the Sicamous Economic Development Corporation and community business sponsors, including Twin Anchors who built the ferry. The bridge is scheduled to be completed in 2027 and will include a multi-use pathway to the rail trail.

District of Sicamous Mayor Colleen Anderson thanked everyone saying, "What a collaborative, great partnership this is, has been, and is going to be and will just grow from here. Being KM 0.5 here in Sicamous we couldn't be prouder. We realize this trail is going to be such an economic driver for the entire area."

The new section of trail remains open through September as long as the new Sicamous Ferry Society has sufficient funds to run shuttles across the narrows to the KM 0.5 trailhead. Already, over 11,000 people have used the new trail section since a counter was installed in May.

A Public Information Bulletin with access details, maps, and construction updates is available at [shuswapnorthokanaganrailtrail.ca](http://shuswapnorthokanaganrailtrail.ca).

The rail trail partners thank everyone for their patience and continued support as everyone works toward completing the Rail Trail.

### **Construction & Next Steps**

Further erosion repairs are required along this section and will proceed in the fall/winter once environmental reviews are complete and low-water window permits are in place. Due to the delayed construction of the R.W. Bruhn Bridge on Highway 1, **full access from Sicamous to the rail trail is anticipated in 2027.**



*Splatsin te Secwépemc Kukpi7 Michael Christian cuts the ribbon with RDNO Chair Shirley Fowler, CSR D Chair Natalya Melnychuk, Armstrong Councillor Jessie Valstar, CSR D Area E Director Rhona Martin, RDNO Area F Director Allysa Hopkins, and District of Sicamous Mayor Colleen Anderson, highlighting the importance of partnership, stewardship, and community connection along the Rail Trail.*

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