

NEWS RELEASE

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Ribbon Cutting Officially Opens Mara Lake to Grindrod Section of the Splat'sin te Secwépemc / Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail



Splat'sin Kukpi7 Edna Felix cuts the ribbon to officially open the next section of the Splat'sin te Secwépemc / Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail between Mara Lake and Grindrod.

Mara, B.C.— Rail Trail partners celebrated yet another milestone officially opening a new section of the Splat'sin te Secwépemc / Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail between Mara Lake and Grindrod, BC.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place Friday, July 17, led by **Splat'sin te Secwépemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Edna Felix** together with the North Okanagan and Columbia Shuswap Regional District Board Chairs.

Kukpi7 Felix opened the event with a welcome message acknowledging the collaboration and partnership that has made the rail trail possible.



"The continued development of the Splat'sin te Secwépemc / Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail reflects what can be achieved when we work together in the spirit of partnership and respect," said **Kukpi7 Felix**. "This trail follows lands that have been part of Secwépemc territory since time immemorial, and Splat'sin is proud to help create a place where people can experience and appreciate the beauty, history, and cultural significance of this area. Together with our partners, we are creating a lasting legacy that strengthens connections between our communities while honouring and caring for these lands for future generations."

Kukpi7 Felix was joined by regional leaders including Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSR D) Chair **Natalya Melnychuk**, Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) Chair **Shirley Fowler**, RDNO Area F Director **Alyssa Hopkins**.

"Through this project, we are celebrating our region's history, strengthening connections between communities, and encouraging people to explore this area in a sustainable way," stated **RDNO Chair Shirley Fowler**. "Each section completed brings new opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors while appreciating the unique beauty and character of the North Okanagan and Secwépemc territory."

"This project demonstrates the power of regional collaboration," said **CSR D Chair Natalya Melnychuk**. "Each new section completed moves us closer to a continuous trail that will connect communities, support local economic development, and provide lasting benefits for residents and visitors. We are proud to celebrate this achievement alongside our regional partners."

"The opening of this new section of trail is an exciting milestone for our communities and a testament to what can be achieved through strong partnerships," stated **Area F Director Alyssa Hopkins**. This trail not only provides a safe and accessible space for residents and visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of our region, but it also strengthens connections between communities, supports local businesses, and promotes healthy, active transportation."

This section of the rail trail was made possible through an investment from Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada's Active Transportation Fund (ATF). The funds were used to complete trail surfacing between km 14.8 at the south end of Mara Lake, and km 27.3 at Grindrod.

This funding will also assist in completing the remainder of the rail trail between Sicamous km 0.0 and Stepney X Road at km 42.6.

"Canada's new government is proud to celebrate the opening of another section of the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail," said the **Honourable Stephen Fuhr**, Member of Parliament for Kelowna and



Secretary of State for Defence Procurement. "This is an important milestone in connecting communities in South Central British Columbia through active travel while enhancing their access to nature."

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 the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Askews Foods, SASCU, and the Rotary Club of Salmon Arm.

A Public Information Bulletin with access details, maps, and construction updates is available at shuswapnorthokanaganrailtrail.ca.

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

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