

# Okanagan Rail Trail - Making it the Best it can be

by Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail



▲ Laurie Postill, Trail Ambassador and Vice President of FORT

Toby Frisk, a Trail Ambassador for ORTI, is leading the foundational FORT group. "The remarkable cooperation that came together to acquire the 50km rail corridor and build the trail, is getting even stronger as the owner jurisdictions (Regional District of North Okanagan, District of Lake Country, Okanagan Indian Band, and City of Kelowna) work together for operational planning, policy development, communications and marketing", says Frisk. "FORT is excited to be the official non-government

partner supporting the owner jurisdictions and Okanagan Rail Trail".

"Our communities were part of building this trail, and we believe that citizens will step up to volunteer for the trail, and support fundraising campaigns to enhance trail amenities", says Laurie Postill, FORT's Vice-President. "It will be more than just a trail, it will be a place to connect to the land, communities and stories of our beautiful valley", adds Postill.

When complete, the Okanagan Rail Trail will provide a continuous, 51 km trail between downtown Kelowna and Coldstream. At this time, the trail can be enjoyed as two separate sections: 30 km of compact aggregate from Coldstream to McCarthy Road in Lake Country, and 14 km of paved trail within the City of Kelowna.

The website: [okanaganrailtrail.ca](http://okanaganrailtrail.ca) includes a trail map, tips for trail etiquette, and updates on the trail. Watch for news about the launch of a fundraising campaign to support trailhead developments in the northern section of the rail trail. Together, we can make the trail the best it can be!



Open now for a complete season, it is clear that the Okanagan Rail Trail is becoming a favourite among local residents and visitors.

Trail counters have tallied use levels that far surpass the initial projections, and it is easy to see many happy faces as families, friends and individuals enjoy the beautiful route for cycling and walking. The flat, off-road trail has made it possible for many more people to get active. From toddlers starting out on strider bikes to seniors touring the trail in the "Cycling Without Age" trishaw, the trail gives everyone a chance to build outdoor activity into our lifestyle.

The spirit of cooperation and community support responsible for building the rail trail still continues.

Following the successful community effort that raised \$7.8 M in 2 years for trail construction, several members of the former Okanagan Rail Trail Initiative (ORTI) have formed the "Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail". Committed to see the trail become the best it can be, the Friends group (FORT for short), is developing programs for trail ambassadors, trail Improvements and fundraising.