

News Release



**For immediate release
June 10, 2009**

Cowichan Foundation launches campaign to save Kinsol Trestle

Campaign aims to raise \$2 million to restore tallest wooden railway trestle in the Commonwealth

Duncan, BC – Thirty years after the last train crossed the Kinsol Trestle, a \$2 million fundraising campaign has been launched to rehabilitate one of the world's tallest wooden railway trestles to its former glory and close the last link in the Cowichan Valley portion of the Trans-Canada Trail.

"This is a day that many of us have been working towards for a long, long time," said Jack Peake, Chair of the Kinsol Trestle Capital Campaign, speaking at the official campaign launch today. "There aren't that many opportunities in a lifetime to do something that will have a dramatic impact on generations to follow. But this is one of those."

"There are a lot of good, solid reasons for saving this historic structure. Preserving a piece of history is one of them, completing a key part of the Trans Canada Trail is another and there are a lot of economic benefits which will flow from this important infrastructure project," said Peake.

The rehabilitation work will replace unsound timbers, reinforce eight structural trestle bents and build a new 614-foot pathway for hikers, runners, bicyclists and horse back riders. It will ensure that the historic characteristics, including the span, height and timbered design qualities of the original structure, are preserved as the original timbers are replaced, where necessary.

The Kinsol Trestle Capital Campaign plans to raise \$2 million from the public to finish the restoration of the famous local landmark. Restoration costs have been estimated at \$5.7 million, of which \$4.1 million has already been committed by the province and a regional agency. In addition, many local businesses have agreed to donate in-kind services to the campaign by supplying necessary construction materials and labour.

"The Kinsol Trestle is a valuable icon of the logging heritage that is so important in the Cowichan Valley. Contractors, business employers and residents of the Valley will also benefit from the timeliness of the rehabilitation work," said Duncan Kerr, Vice President and COO of Western Forest Products, one of the region's largest employers.

"We are pleased to be able to work with the rehabilitation team to provide timbers and lumber for the project. We look forward to hearing about other contributions so that the rehabilitation work can get fully underway," he said.

Local union members have offered to provide the skilled manpower needed to provide, mill and deliver the timbers. Local service clubs in the Cowichan Valley area are planning to complete a key segment of the Trestle as their contribution and others will contribute their professional services at diminished rates or no charge.

The rehabilitated Kinsol Trestle will be part of the Trans Canada Trail and complete the 120 km Cowichan Valley Trail. Seven other rail trestles along the Cowichan Valley Trail route have already been rebuilt or rehabilitated for trail use.

“This project will create an estimated 59 jobs, including 30 in direct construction, 20 indirect jobs in manufacturing and support and nine in engineering and project management. In the longer term, it will bring more visitors and in turn spur growth in outdoor/adventure, educational, culinary and cultural tourism throughout the Cowichan Valley. We already get over 114,000 visitors each year and that number will certainly increase after this project is complete,” said Peake.

The fate of the 614-foot Kinsol Trestle, which soars 145 feet above the Koksilah River near Shawnigan Lake, has been debated since the last train crossed it in 1979. The province assumed ownership in 1984 from the CNR and numerous studies have been done since then to determine its future. In 2008, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) accepted a final report, which recommended rehabilitating the structure, bringing numerous economic benefits to the surrounding communities.

Peake is confident that local residents will step up to contribute to the Capital Campaign. Individuals can donate on-line, by phone or by mail. Complete details are available at www.kinsol.ca.

Detailed engineering and survey work will be undertaken as soon as possible. This will allow timber and lumber assembly and construction tendering to take place in the fall of 2009 and construction will begin in the spring of 2010. The official Trestle and Trail opening is scheduled for early summer 2011.

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NOTE TO EDITORS – Campaign Chair Jack Peake, CVRD Chair Gerry Giles and Brian Farquhar, Parks and Trail Manager, CVRD, will be available for interviews immediately following the official announcement at the Kinsol Trestle on Wednesday, June 10. Media wishing to contact them after the event, should call Dave Traynor at 250-727-7464.

For more information contact:

Dave Traynor, Acumen Communications Group
250-727-7464 (office) - 250-516-6232 (mobile) dave@acumenpr.ca

The Kinsol Trestle Capital Campaign is spearheaded by the Cowichan Foundation, which has a long history of contributing to the social, cultural and physical improvement of communities in the CVRD. The Foundation has partnered with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and Community Futures, Cowichan, which is providing administrative services and a campaign office. For more information, please visit www.kinsol.ca.