



Hudson's Bay Company (1849) Heritage Trail

PROGRESS REPORT, SUMMER 2015



Klahanee Heritage Resource conducted an Archaeological Impact Assessment on the three proposed areas where new campsites were to be built along the trail. Members of the Sto:lo First Nations, Spuzzum, Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands participated in the study on their traditional lands.





Olivine Trail Heritage Reconnaissance and Report was conducted by archaeologists Michael Klassen and Brenda Gould. The Olivine trail is a very old route that stays high on the ridge between Lodestone Lake and the Tulameen River. The tread is well established and has hand built rock retaining walls. The grade and design matches other sections of the HBC. This trail is one of three trails that could have been used by the brigades to reach Tulameen from Lodestone Lake. According to a story from Podunk Davis, the brigades used different routes to ensure enough feed for the hundreds of pack horses. This archaeological report will enable us to proceed with an application for heritage protection for the Olivine Trail. With the discovery this section, we now have successfully re-opened a route from Peers Creek to Tulameen. The Olivine section provides a safe public access to Tulameen. This study and report was funded by the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society.





The National Trails Coalition grant to the Hope Mountain Centre enabled us to have a three person crew on the HBC for 8 weeks this summer. Both the provincial and federal governments were partners in this project.



Signs were installed along the route at road access points and kilometer markers were placed along the entire 74 km route. Many volunteers assisted throughout the summer along with members of the Hope Mountain Centre.



One of the highlights along the trail this summer was when these three young men came hiking into the newly constructed Colville Camp. They had just graduated from high school in Merritt and wanted to do something challenging to celebrate their graduation!



Three new campsites were strategically constructed along the trail to encourage trail users to camp at designated locations. Danger trees that were removed were used to construct rustic furniture. Backcountry toilets and bear proof food caches were also installed at each campsite.



Two final kiosks were installed at the historical campsites of the brigades at Lodestone Lake and Tulameen. Both kiosks were sponsored by local families. This completes all five HBC brigade camps from Hope to Tulameen.



The trail has three of these large kiosk shelters along the route. The last one is at the Tulameen River crossing. The BC Heritage Society assisted with financial support for the signage and the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen for the structure and other 2015 project costs.

PROJECT SUMMARY

In 2009, I met with Hope Mountain Centre, Backcountry Horsemen of BC, government agencies and other interested people in the HBC Trail. As a result of that meeting we developed a detailed plan to resurrect the trail over the next five years.

Since starting the project in 2010, many organizations, government agencies, individuals and groups have contributed financially. With this financial assistance, backed by thousands of volunteer hours, we have achieved our goal.

2015 was the final push towards completion of the trail and it resulted in a 74 kilometer continuous route following the path of the fur traders through the formidable Cascade Mountains of British Columbia.

Throughout this entire project, the moral and financial support by the OSPS has been invaluable. The original notes of Harley Hatfield and other OSPS documents laid the groundwork for our generation to continue what they had started decades ago. Without this ongoing support, attainment of our goal would not have been possible.

I would like to sincerely thank OSPS directors for their guidance and support over the many years I have been involved in this exciting heritage project. I could always count on their support when I needed it.

When I first started this project, I was not aware of just how important this trail was to the creation of British Columbia and to Canada.

This trail not only saved the HBC's fur trade in North America, it also played a roll in securing the future of Canada. HBC Chief Factor in Fort Victoria, Sir James Douglas, acknowledged this in a letter to London in August of 1850.

"It is a great relief to have established the practicability of this route to the interior through the formidable barrier of mountains which separates it from Frasers River — while it will have the effect of imparting a greater degree of confidence of our own operations, it may also have an important bearing on the future destinies of the country at large; a triumph, probably the last of the kind reserved for the Fur Trade".

Happy trails,

Kelley Cook

