



*xwít i? s'w'k'na?qin*

# Kilometre Zero - Phase 1

## at *K'ək'mapłqs* (Little Head of the Lake)



**Before**

Once the place for shunting rail cars, the Km 0 trailhead is being transformed towards a signature northern gateway to the Okanagan Rail Trail.

The first priority has been to bring back the Okanagan Sunflowers (Arrowleaf Balsamroot) and other native plants representative of the dryland ecosystems along the route.

Once again, our communities have come forward to support the work.



# Short Timeline - Big Progress

**In April, Km 0 still had the look of a transportation corridor.**

A plan for 'naturescaping' was developed by a Registered Professional Biologist and ecological restoration specialists, with incorporation of Syilx values and knowledge shared by the Okanagan Indian Band.

**In July, Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail (FORT) launched the 'Sunflower' fundraising campaign for Phase 1**

Within 3 months, 70% of the fundraising target was raised. Two key events boosted the campaign - the 'Filmed by Bike' film festival and a garage sale and bake sale hosted jointly by Vernon Rotary Clubs. Thanks to these events, grants and generous public donations, Phase 1 for Km 0 could begin.

**By November landscaping was complete.**

Site work began in October, and plants were in the ground in time to ensure their best chance at survival. Generous in-kind donations, and FORT volunteer contributions helped stretch the budget to also cover an innovative temporary irrigation system.



Vernon Rotary Clubs worked together to raise over \$7400 for the Km 0. From left: Angela Yablonski (Vernon Rotary), Dustin Stadnyd (Kalamalka Rotary), Michael Wardlow (Silver Star Rotary) present fundraising proceeds to Anna Dawyd and Laurie Postill (Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail).



# A Learning Journey

Lessons learned will benefit other local restoration projects, and future development and management of the Okanagan Rail Trail greenway.



## Restoring dryland ecosystems is no easy task.

At Km 0, extra effort has gone into giving nature the best chance:

1. **Working from the Ground Up - Soil De-compaction and Enhancement.** Compacted gravel fill areas were dug up, topsoil and compost (RDNO Gro) was mixed in, and the loosened soil was placed to create a 'rough and loose' surface. The hummocky soil may look messy, but it helps slow and hold water, minimize sediment runoff, and create varied levels of light and moisture for plant diversity.
2. **Creating Site Diversity.** Boulders and logs were placed randomly along prepared areas to create a diversity of micro-conditions to support plant and wildlife variety. (These are not ornamental gardens, but the best conditions for natural plant communities to create their own beauty.)
3. **Choosing native plants adapted to local conditions.** Twenty three different species of native trees, shrubs, perennials and grass plugs, as well as a native grass seed mix were supplied by an Okanagan native plant nursery. A surprise early snowfall in late October created a unique challenge, but did not stop the contractors from planting nearly 500 plants within 3 days!
4. **Caring for the Plants as they are becoming established.** Native plants are a great choice for low maintenance, water wise gardening, but they do need some help to get started. The Km 0 restoration plan recommended irrigation for the first 2-3 years until the trees and plants are well established. That is why you will see plastic totes on the hillside and drip irrigation lines. The new planting area will also need to be monitored for invasive weed infestation, and treated as appropriate until a robust native plant community becomes established.

## Much can be learned from the original stewards - the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples.

The Okanagan Indian Band has generously shared Indigenous and cultural knowledge to help advise site restoration, and to include plants of cultural significance. Stories of traditional uses and cultural values will be part of future interpretation in Phase 2.

"From the Syilx Okanagan Perspective, *tmixw* is the nsyilxcən word that most closely translates as "ecology." *Tmixw* includes everything alive—the land, water, insects, people, animals, plants and medicines. Underneath all of the *tmixw* is *tmxwulaxw*—"the land"—the core spirit from which all of creation arises and which unites everything."

"The Syilx take a holistic perspective to look after the environment. They believe everything is connected and needs to be kept in balance. The needs of *tmixw* and *tmxwulaxw* can be achieved when we work together to directly participate in protecting and restoring the environment."

- excerpt from 'Building Climate Resiliency in the Okanagan'

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**Site and Soil Enhancement**



**Hydroseeding**



**Erosion Matting**



**Planting Day**



**Temporary Irrigation**

**FORT Volunteers at Work**







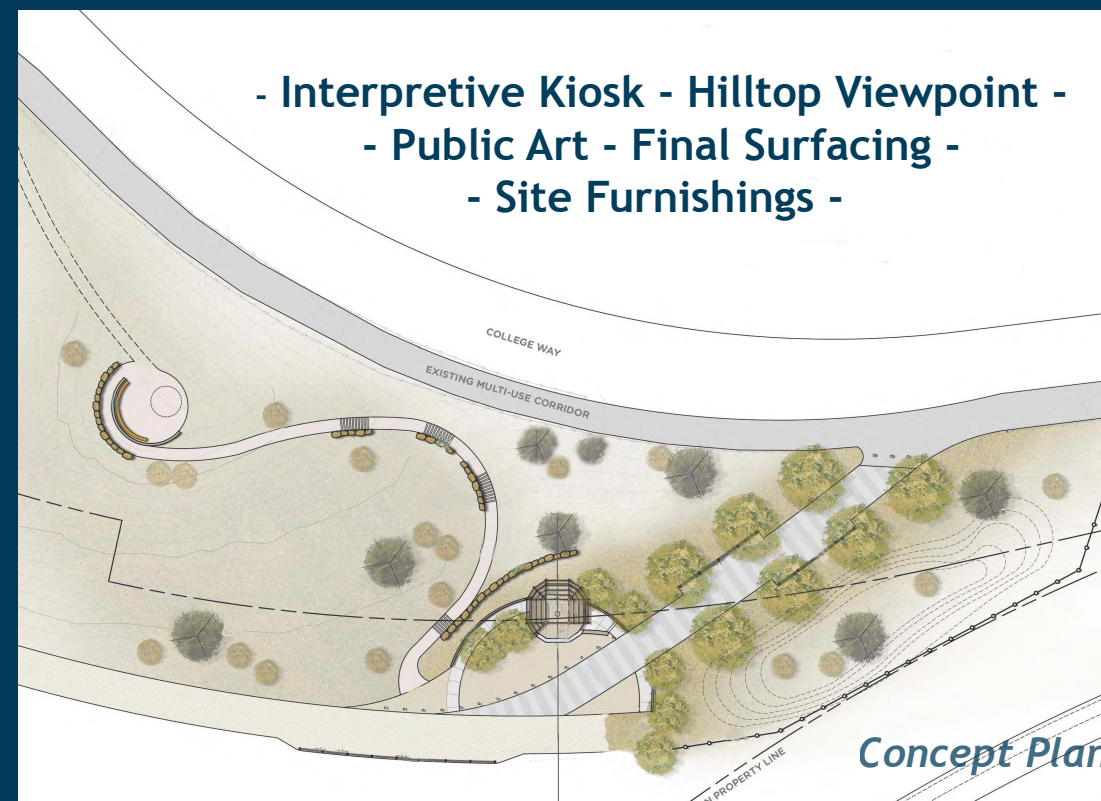
This year's work at Km 0 completes the transformation from railcar shunting yard to the beginning of a natural greenway. Phase 2 will focus on functional and creative gateway infrastructure.

# What's Next?

With the basic foundation complete, Phase 2 can begin! This will include finishing the plaza and a hilltop viewpoint, and creating the artistic and interpretive elements that tell the story of *K'ək'map̓lq̓s* and the rail trail.

If you would like to be part of creating this signature gateway, please consider making a donation.

## Donate Now



# Thank you!

Thank you to **campaign partners**, who helped to raise funds:

Vernon Rotary Clubs  
Ashley Lubyk and Kyle Hoehn, organizers of  
'Filmed by Bike Film Festival'  
FortisBC's Thompson Okanagan Social Committee

Thank you to all **donors** who contributed to Phase 1!

Thank you to **granting agencies**:



**TD Friends of the Environment Foundation**

(Grant to Ribbons of Green Trails Society)

Thank you to **consultants and contractors**:

Bench Landscape Architects  
Associated Environmental Consultants Ltd.  
Sagebrush Nursery  
Cabin Resource Management  
McFarlane Contracting Ltd.

Thank you for **in-kind donations**:

Postill Nixon Earthworks  
RE Postill and Sons Ltd.  
Paul Dick Excavating



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