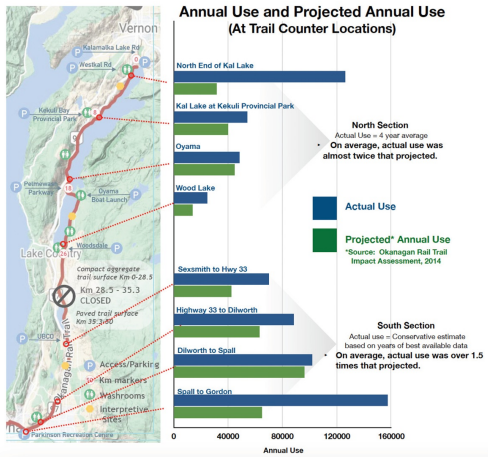




FORT Celebrates 5 Years!

Last month marked the five year anniversary for FORT. A lot has been accomplished since FORT became a society in 2019. The Okanagan Rail Trail has made a huge impact on community recreation, encouraging active transportation opportunities and connecting communities. Over the past five years, Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail has worked along with the owner jurisdictions to enhance all aspects of trail development. Even though we are still waiting for completion of the Addition to Reserve to be able to finish the central section, between Lake Country and the airport, the trail has become a busy place for all its users!

Plan Your Trip Along the Rail Trail



Exceeding Expectations for Trail Usage

Since opening, use along the Okanagan Rail Trail has exceeded expectations by at least 50% even with the north and south sections not yet connected. For some sections, actual use was 2 to 4 times greater than projected, highlighting that our beloved trail is a destination you'll want to return to again and again!



An Iconic Destination Experience in the Okanagan

The Okanagan Rail Trail; known for its beauty and accessibility, is a prime destination for outdoor enthusiasts and families alike. Together with tourism organizations, communities, and recreational groups, we are excited to highlight our loved trail as an iconic destination experience, that provides wide reaching rural and economic benefits.



A Beacon of Environmental Stewardship

FORT has focused on trailside restoration and the planting of native species, fostering a deep connection with nature. With interpretive signage, we are able to share knowledge and promote awareness of plant species and their historical significance. Additionally, by encouraging active transportation, the trail significantly reduces vehicle emissions, contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment for all.



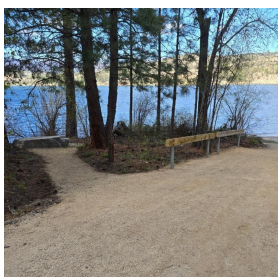
Reconciliation and Indigenous Culture

Collaborating closely with the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) has allowed us to incorporate Indigenous names and history along the trail. We have been able to support the installation of interpretive and wayfinding signs developed by the Okanagan Nation Alliance, ensuring their teachings enrich each users trail experience.



Trewhitt Point Complete

There is a new and exciting access to Wood Lake at Trewhitt Point. Last year several FORT Trail Ambassadors came up with the idea of cleaning up this area and with support from District of Lake Country, Central Okanagan Foundation and FORT Fund Development a collaborative effort has created a lovely spot to stop and enjoy the scenery or have a quick dip in the lake. Bike racks, rock benches, and an ONA sign are now installed, with plans for a vertical rock sign at the entrance. Thanks to our Project Management team for their efforts, helping keep this project under budget.



[Donate to Trail Improvements](#)



Save the Date

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

FORT Day on the Trail will be **Saturday, May 25th**. Watch for the bright yellow tents in each jurisdiction and stop by to have a chat and learn more about how to be a Friend to the trail.

FORT will once again join Ribbons of Green to be a part of the **Sunshine Festival in downtown Vernon on Saturday, June 15th**. Pop by to say hello, we'd love to have a visit.

THANK YOU TO OUR DEDICATED FORT VOLUNTEERS



The Power of Volunteers

As the official partner of the Okanagan Rail Trail, FORT has grown to include over 80 volunteers, who have contributed more than 1200 volunteer hours/year (since 2021), and who have raised close to \$500,000 in grants and donations for continued trail improvement.

Did you know that Trail Ambassadors ride bikes or walk the trail regularly and model etiquette, answer questions and make sure that the trail is a safe and happy place? Our Trail Stewards are looking out for invasive weeds and work hard to encourage the plants to grow at the interpretive sites along the trail.

If you're interested in getting involved, but have questions, please reach out to learn more.

[Become A Friend of Okanagan Rail Trail](#)



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