



June 27, 2025

Re: Columbia Western Rail Trail – Public Notice

To Whom it May Concern:

You are receiving this letter because you have been identified as a potential user of the non-status rail grade, formerly part of the Columbia Western Rail Trail.

Background Information:

The Columbia Western Rail Trail (CWRT) stretches from Castlegar to Midway. It was originally a railroad that was operated by the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR). It was acquired by the Trans Canada Trail Foundation from CPR in 1993 and donated to the Province of BC in 2004. The trail at the time, was managed by Tourism BC.

In 2010, the trail was designated as a Recreational Trail under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and was managed by Recreation Sites and Trails Branch (RST). On July 3, 2020, a Ministerial Order M322 was signed that removed a 67km section of the CWRT from the established recreation site. The section that was removed was from the Castlegar terminus of the CWRT to just north of Christina Lake. The reason for disestablishing this portion of the trail was attributed to the route's challenging terrain; multiple competing users; and the complex infrastructure.

After this portion of the CWRT was disestablished, it became a non-status rail grade on crown land. At this time, there is no preventative maintenance being conducted on the CWRT and there is no funding available for maintenance of the rail grade. The rail grade is currently being managed to a wilderness status. The Selkirk Resource District engineering staff will respond to reports of issues on the rail grade if there is an immediate environmental or safety issue that requires mitigation.

Upcoming Changes - Signage:

This summer the Province will be posting signage along the non-status rail grade formerly part of the Columbia Western Rail Trail. Signage will be installed at entrance points to the non-status rail grade, and at locations that require notification to users due to safety concerns. Wording for the signage is below, along with a description about why the signage is being posed. Areas that will have signage include trestles, tunnels and rock fall hazard areas along the rail grade.

Trestle Design Limit – Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic Only. No Motor Vehicles. The trestles were originally designed for train traffic and later the guardrails were installed and

designed for recreational use. The bridge is an insufficient width for motor vehicles. The guard rails on the bridge are an insufficient height and strength to prevent a vehicle that hits the guardrails from breaking through and falling into the ravine.

Warning Bulldog Tunnel – Active Rockfall, Extreme Danger, Do Not Enter. The Province is planning to undertake a more detailed inspection of the tunnel. The immediate concerns are that the existing bracing in the tunnel is failing and there is no protection to prevent rocks from falling on people passing through the tunnel. Unlike naturally formed caves, tunnels are geologically unstable and require continual monitoring and maintenance to mitigate rockfall hazard.

Warning – No stopping between signs due to rock fall hazard. There are areas of rock walls with higher likelihood of rocks coming down that could potentially injure trail users. Areas that have been identified as a higher hazard for rockfall danger will be signed to keep people moving and not stationary beneath identified hazards.

Next Steps:

The Province will be obtaining more detailed information about the structures on the rail trail this year. This information will be used to inform decision makers on next steps regarding future use, remediation measures and/or deactivation of structures or sections of the rail grade. The Province will provide stakeholders and other user groups updated information once it becomes available. Stakeholder and other user groups will be afforded an opportunity to provide input at that time.

If you have any questions, please contact FOR.SelkirkDistrictOffice@gov.bc.ca

Sincerely,



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