



Churn Creek Gateway Low Mobility Trail

Grand Opening



Media Release

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For immediate release

Churn Creek Gateway Low Mobility Trail Officially Open **Accessible trail promises new adventures for all visitors**

Churn Creek, B.C. – The Churn Creek area of the Cariboo Chilcotin is the latest community in the Cariboo Regional District (CRD) to develop a wheelchair accessible wilderness trail. It's called the Churn Creek Gateway Low Mobility Trail and was built in partnership between the Cariboo Regional District (CRD); the Friends of Churn Creek Protected Area Society; the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development through the BC Community Recreation Program; Northern Development Initiative Trust; and the Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition. The Churn Creek Gateway Low Mobility Trail is located within the Churn Creek Protected Area where the Fraser River and Churn Creek meet.

"It's wonderful to see this accessible trail project come together in the Cariboo. The Cariboo Regional District is to be applauded for making these accessible trails a priority. The Government of B.C. is committed to improving accessibility across the province, helping open up opportunities for people with mobility issues to explore these interesting and beautiful places," said Coralee Oakes, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and MLA for Cariboo North. "The completion represents one of approximately 15 accessible trail upgrades in the Cariboo region that we are pleased to support with a grant of \$401,250 through the Community Recreation Program."

From the \$401,250 Community Recreation Program grant awarded to the Cariboo Regional District for the accessible trail upgrade projects, \$30,000 was dedicated to Churn Creek Gateway Low Mobility Trail.

Approximately 450 metres long and featuring a packed, crushed gravel surface, this accessible interpretive wilderness trail loop offers unique geographical features and connections to the human history of the area. Sagebrush and prickly pear cacti line and surround the trail, while the meeting of Churn Creek with the Fraser River provides spectacular views. A particular highlight of the trail is a sacred petroglyph boulder created by ancestors of the modern Secwepem'c (Shuswap) people and repatriated to the area in 2012 by the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem and High Bar First Nations.

"I am extremely pleased that we have now completed the Churn Creek Low Mobility Trail," stated CRD Chair and Electoral Area G Director, Al Richmond. "This is the next step in making the Cariboo Chilcotin one of the most attractive wheelchair accessible tourism destinations in the world. Projects such as the Churn Creek Gateway Low Mobility Trail show what can be accomplished through regional collaboration and commitment to improving the quality of life for residents and visitors of all abilities."

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“Northern Development is proud to have provided financial support for this project through our Community Halls and Recreation Facilities program,” said Northern Development Initiative Trust CEO Janine North. “The development of these wheelchair accessible wilderness trails means that more people will be able to enjoy this beautiful part of our province, which will increase recreation opportunities and visitor numbers to the area.”

“This is the kind of regional project that the Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition is excited to be a part of,” stated CCBAC Chair and CRD Director, Chad Mernett. “It is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when you have champions willing to roll up their sleeves and get the job done who are supported by partnerships that demonstrate cooperation and collaboration.”

The trail has a very gentle grade as well as an accessible outhouse, an accessible picnic table, two benches and a kiosk at the trailhead with information about the trail and the local area. The kiosk design reflects a Secwepem’c pithouse, complete with entrance ladder through the roof. There is ample parking available for visitors.

The Churn Creek Gateway Low Mobility Trail is located approximately 60 km southeast of Williams Lake and the drive takes about 2.5 hours. From Williams Lake, visitors should travel on Highway 20 approximately 3 km and then turn left onto Dog Creek Road. Continue on this road until Dog Creek Valley and then follow signs for Gang Ranch, which will take visitors across the Fraser River Bridge. At the next intersection, take the left turn onto Empire Valley Road.

“Our Society is excited to be part of showcasing the new fully accessible interpretive trail near Churn Creek,” said Friends of Churn Creek Protected Area Society President, Ordell Steen. “We would like to thank all of our partners who joined us in making this trail a reality. Opportunities for all people to enjoy the amazing landscapes and history of the Churn Creek area have been greatly enhanced by the trail and its associated facilities. We encourage everyone to visit the trail site.”

On-going management of the site is provided by the Friends of Churn Creek Protected Area Society. For more information, visit friendsofchurn.ca.

About Community Recreation Program

The \$30-million Community Recreation Program was developed to address the unique challenges faced by communities in the Province with respect to meeting their recreational infrastructure needs. The program invests in local government capital projects that make communities healthier, more active places in which to live. Through the duration of the program, the B.C. government provided grants for 98 recreation projects throughout B.C. – to help fund everything from bike paths, trails, fitness facilities and walkways to playgrounds and recreation centres.

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About the CRD Accessible Trail Network

The CRD Board passed a resolution in 2006 to work towards developing the Cariboo Chilcotin as a world leader in accessible outdoor recreation and tap into niche tourism markets for persons of low mobility. Other wheelchair accessible sites within the CRD include Tatlayoko, Kersley, Cottonwood Historic Site, 108 Mile/Sepa Lakes, Lac La Hache, Horsefly Salmon Spawning Trails, Gavin Lakeshore Trail and most recently the Hallis Lake Low Mobility Trail. There are currently 10 other accessible wilderness trails being developed by the CRD, some of which were funded through the Community Recreation Program.

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