



Rotary bids to get the Rushbrook Trail back on track

By Kris Schumacher

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After years of being closed due to safety concerns, with any luck the Rushbrook Trail will be officially re-opened to the public some time in 2008, thanks in large part to the upcoming Rotary auction.

The news comes from the Prince Rupert Rotary Club on behalf of the City of Prince Rupert, which has secured the funds in their project budget necessary to complete existing engineering plans for the trail.

The plans have been designed to improve the Rushbrook Trail so as to secure the safety of its users from the dangers of rock slides, a common and serious hazard for the area.

"The Rushbrook Trail project is a considered a large project for us and attracts a pretty good hunk of our local Rotary money," said Craig Dusel, a Prince Rupert Rotarian involved in the Rushbrook project.

"The improvements will essentially shift the trail away from where a slide could hurt someone."

The Rotary will be putting up \$79,000 toward the improvement of the trail, and has also secured \$75,000 from the Coast Sustainability Trust, \$150,000 from the Olympic/Paralympic Live Sites fund, \$25,000 from the City of Prince Rupert, and another \$27,000 from Western Economic Diversification through the local Community Futures Development Corporation.

The current total of \$356,000 now available for the Rushbrook Trail project is something the Rotary is pleased to announce, because it has been a project in progress for some time now.

The engineering plan, comprised of several assessments and plans, statistically models the new trail a distance far enough away from the cliff to ensure the safety of the public.

"If we could achieve that separation to those recommendations, we would have a professionally engineered trail that would allow the city in good conscience to re-open it, knowing the risk to human safety is very much reduced," said Dusel.

"It's taken a while for us to get to this point where we are fully designed, and we believe the cost of the project will fall within our budget, or just shy of it."

There are three ways the improvements will happen in order to meet the engineering safety model. Where there is enough room, the trail will be moved further out toward the water, between two and five metres from its present alignment.

In cases where there isn't enough land to move the trail the required distance, a mass wall of large concrete lock-blocks will be erected to capture a potential slide, leaving people on the other side safe.

In three instances, where there isn't room for either of those options, bridges will be built from point to point over the water, providing the physical safety distance from the slope.

The slope assessment was done by the firm Trow Associates Inc., the bridges were designed locally by Coast Isle Engineering, and the coordinating drawings incorporating the recommendations were done by David Nairne and Associates.

"We want to have a substantial part of it done by March 31, and I know that seems pretty tight in the schedule," said Dusel. "But with just a few technical hurdles to leap, we think we can be tendering the project before Christmas and constructing after Christmas."

The Prince Rupert Rotary Club Auction will be held on Nov. 19, 20, and 21, and is the single largest fundraising event of the year put on by the Rotary.

All money raised by the Rotary's numerous efforts is pooled into a project budget, which is then distributed back into the community through approved projects. The Prince Rupert Rotary Club does have one specific internal fundraising dinner that benefits Rotary International, but none of the money raised by the auction or any other initiatives is allocated outside of Prince Rupert.

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