



Chilliwack Outdoor Club Trail Maintenance 2024 Report

by Jim Alkins

Again this year, COC members worked with Trails BC members on trail maintenance that was fun and very rewarding for the participants of all capabilities. The climate and terrain in our beautiful area make ongoing trail maintenance some of the most demanding in the country and, without it, many of the trails we love and enjoy would be impassable in a very short time. The remaining “atmospheric river” flood damage repairs and Trans Mountain Pipeline construction in the Coquihalla plus high-risk fire season limited access to large sections of the TCT. Therefore, a major focus of the COC this year was the construction of a 2km realignment of the Tolmie section. The Emil Anderson Group donation of repurposed timbers and TCT Foundation funding for metal mesh was instrumental in the COC’s ability to proceed with the bridge replacement and enhancement projects on the Angelwing and Riverside sections of the TCT. Once again, the COC stepped up with energetic members to take on the trail clearing of Vedder Mountain Ridge trail, Pierce Lake Trail, Slesse Mountain Trail. The COC welcomed members who had a few hours when the call was made to come out and enjoy doing some feel good trail work in a safe environment with a healthy dose of laughter, camaraderie and friendship. After every trail maintenance day, the crew had a sense of accomplishment which was very gratifying. As is often stated - a day working on the trails renews the spirit and health of the participants.

Here’s what was accomplished in 2024:

- **Total Volunteer Hours* - 2,370**
- **27 individuals from COC and 8 individuals from Trails BC participated on at least one day**
- **57 total work days**
- **345 worker days**

* Includes time at site, travel time, preparation time, equipment maintenance time. There were also 9 Trail BC participants that also joined on a number of the days, their time has been included in the totals.

The COC focused on the maintenance and upgrading of the:

- ❖ **Vedder Mountain Ridge Trail (4.5km one-way)**
- ❖ **Pierce Lake Trail (5.7km one-way)**
- ❖ **Trans Canada Trail (TCT) –**
 - **Liumchen to Chilliwack Lake (36km)**
 - **Paleface Pass (14km)**
 - **Through the Coquihalla Canyon where accessible**
 - **Sowaqua, Jessica to Carolin Mine Road and Shylock sections, (about 16km)**
 - **In addition there were various hikes to assess alignment options from Britton Creek to Brodie Station by Larson Hill (30km)**
- ❖ **The Slesse Memorial Trail from the parking area to the propeller cairn – (about 7 km one-way)**

Trail Maintenance Activities

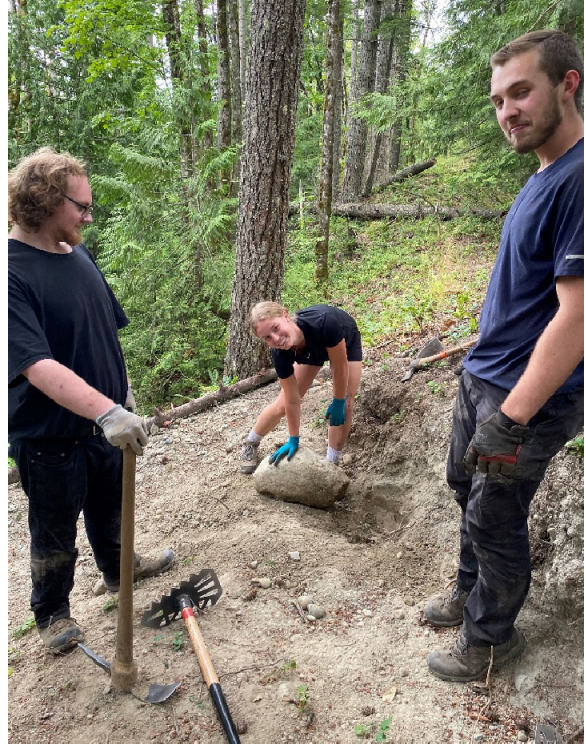
Realignment of 2km section of Tolmie TCT:

In February to April crews of 6 to 12 members constructed the 2km new section of trail to avoid private property and difficult clay slopes. It took 16 work days to complete the trail across steep side slopes. Most of the work was removal of deadfall, stripping the vegetation cover and organic soil layer and then shaping the gravel layer. The alignment weaved around tree trunks so no trees were removed.



The trail alignment was approved by RST and an archaeological review was completed to identify potential areas of interest. Two sites were identified on the ridge so the trail was routed to avoid them. Signage was erected to recognize support for the trail.

We also returned to the new Tolmie section to widen the switch back turns and sections of the trail with summer students and COC members.



Pierce Lake Trailhead Parking Lot Clearing, COC members used power trimmers to clear the soft vegetation around the parking area to increase visibility of the parked vehicles to minimize vandalism while a friendly brown bear watched.



Construction Replacement Bridges East of Riverside Campground

The repurposed timbers from Emil Anderson Group were used to replace a 20ft long bridge in April.



Addition of Curbs and Expanded Metal Mesh to Bridge surfaces

The Backcountry Horsemen Association provided expanded metal mesh which was attached to the deck on 8 bridges in the Chilliwack River Valley which reduced the slipping hazards. Pressure treated 4x4 were also attached along the edges to increase visibility for horses and bikers.



Construct a new bridge deck and ramps over a DFO box culvert near Angel Wing

The top of the box culvert constructed in 2000 by DFO to split the water flowing into the north and south spawning channels, failed when a horse was crossing it. A new bridge and ramps was constructed over the box culvert at the request of DFO. Cedar blowdown in the area was used for the stringers and bench seats and timber from Emil Anderson Group were used for the deck.



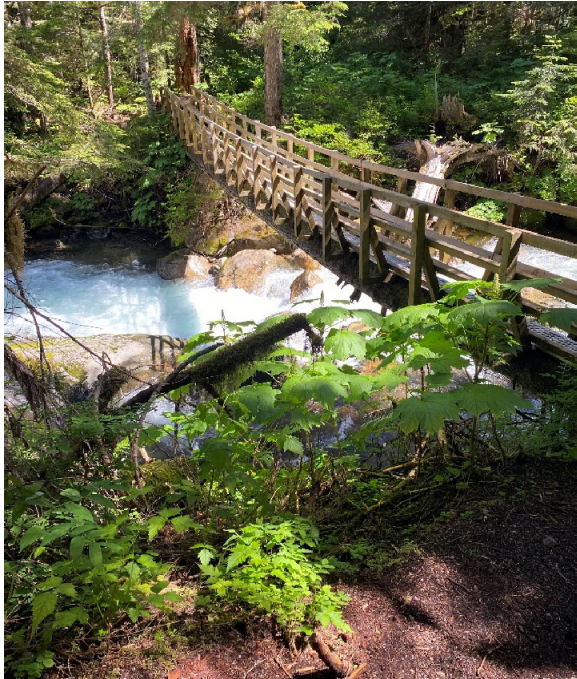
Pierce Lake Trail: The focus was the annual trimming of the soft vegetation to improve the sightlines around the parking area on Chilliwack Lake Road, and cleaning of the pit toilet. Numerous blowdowns were cleared from the trail up to about 1km from the lower lake. The railing on the log bridge was also repaired.



Mount Slesse Memorial Trail: The trail was cleared from the parking area to the propeller. The student summer crew, under COC supervision, spent two days on the trail using machetes and loppers. Power tools could not be used because of the fire risk. The COC members also continued the clearing of alders with loppers and handsaws on several hikes to the propeller.



Concern with Slesse Mountain Bridge, The major log bridge across the Slesse River was constructed about 8 years ago by a RST contractor. The bridge continues to function as designed however the steps cut into the end of the large log have begun to breakdown due to insects. This deterioration if not addressed, will result in a bridge failure as the end of the bridge drops from the supporting abutment.

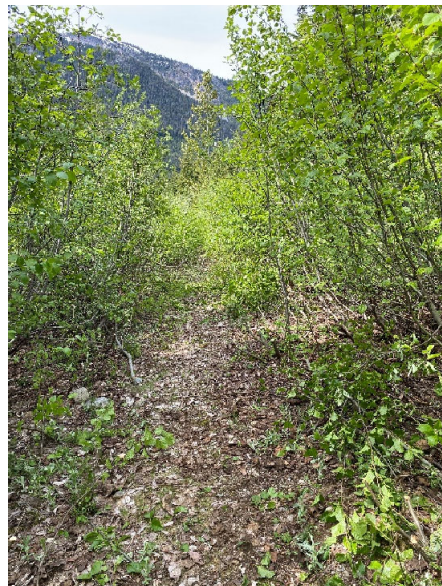
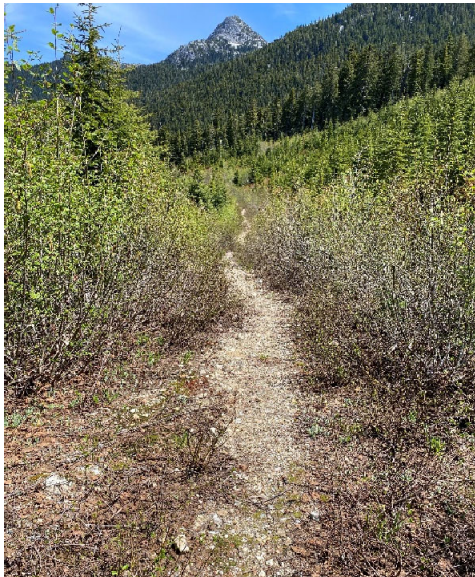


The Trans Canada Trail:

Club members worked with volunteers from Trails BC on the TCT completed the annual removal of deadfall trimming of alder brush and trimming soft vegetation from Liumchen Creek to Chilliwack Lake from March to June.



Silver Skagit Road was closed to the public again this year due to 2021 flood damage. The contractor completing the road repairs allowed the COC crews access for trail maintenance. Deadfall and alder brush clearing were completed on the 5km long Hicks Section and on the Paleface Pass section to the bridge 7km from the trail head. The remainder of the 14km long trail was cleared from the Chilliwack Lake trailhead. The heavy alder growth continues to be a challenge.



Due to the length of the Paleface Pass section mountain bikes were used to reach the bridge at 7km midpoint of the section with the trimmers; the ride back down was much quicker.



Periodic TCT Deadfall Removal, COC members cleared blowdown along the TCT in the Chilliwack River area periodically throughout the year as issues were identified. Drainage issues and trail enhancements were also addressed.



Vedder Mountain Ridge Trail, Deadfall which consisted of small diameter trees was removed from the trail in June. The trail is frequently used by various hikers who also remove the small blowdowns so the trail is well maintained.



The Coquihalla Canyon Sections The Club worked with Trails BC members to clear deadfall and repair erosion on the Sawaqua, Jessica, Shylock and Portia sections of the TCT where access was possible. Future work will be required to develop the trail access under Hwy 5 at the new Sowaqua bridges where the landscape work was just being completed.





Coquihalla Realignment, Road washouts, pipeline construction and road construction activities limited access in most areas through the Coquihalla from Britton Creek to Brodie Station at Larsons Hill. Re-alignment of about 17km of the TCT will be required due the major washouts of the KVR by the Coldwater River in 2021. Route assessments were completed with support from the Trans Mountain Pipeline staff. Major trail work will be required to establish the TCT through the Coquihalla section to Brookmere in 2025. The plan is to stay on the east side of the Coldwater River making use of the pipeline corridors.



