



**NORTH VANCOUVER ISLAND (NVI) CHAPTER
SALMON BREWSTER TRAIL CORRIDOR PROJECT
STRATHCONA REGIONAL DISTRICT GRANT FUNDING
AGREEMENT SRD 22-002**

FINAL REPORT - MARCH 2024

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SALMON BREWSTER TRAIL CORRIDOR PROJECT

FINAL REPORT MARCH 2024

BACKGROUND

The Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor connecting three horse camps (RSTBC recreation sites: Memekay, Brewster and Pine Marten) was legally established by a Province of BC Order in Council in 2013. Subsequently, BCHBC - NVI entered into a 10-year maintenance and operating agreement with RSTBC, Agreement No. PA14DCR-01. April 2023 to March 31st, 2024, marks the 10th year of the partnership agreement, PA14DCR-01. Through this agreement, BCHBC - NVI maintains and operates three equestrian friendly campsites and the Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor, approx. 40 km in length. (see attached 2019 RSTBC Brochure)

In 2013, a grand opening was held at the Memekay horse camp (recreation site) with over 50 people and 20 horses in camp. The Memekay horse camp facility (RSTBC recreation site) includes 12 purpose built camping sites with adjacent horse paddocks. Equestrian users have visited the site on a continuous basis with high usage occurring between May and September each year. The Memekay horse camp is the most popular of the three horse camps, due to ease of access, size of recreation site and access to both the crown grazing lands and the Salmon Brewster trail corridor. In addition to equestrian users, the Memekay recreation site is loved and used by fishers (Jan to April), bike packers (summer), hunters (Sept to Dec) and hikers. Statistics are collected annually indicating approximately 800 'visits' throughout the year.

Over the past 10 years BCHBC NVI has accomplished leading the development of the three recreation sites with horse containment areas, a social gathering shelter at Memekay (largest and purpose built horse camp, recreation site), accessibility improvements, annual trail inspections along with maintenance and improvements as funding was available. NVI volunteers have led several site visits with contractors to conduct trail assessments with the objective of being ready for grant applications that would address the need for rehabilitation and long term sustainability of the approximately 40 km Salmon Brewster trail corridor.

The NVI chapter annual operating costs at the Memekay Horse Camp have increased from approximately \$2,000.00 a year to \$3,500.00 annually. The BCHBC NVI chapter operating and maintenance costs are funded through donations, membership fees and fund-raising activities. Project costs are funded through grants, donations, and fund-raising activities.

PROJECT CONTEXT

BCHBC NVI in conjunction with RSTBC recognized that the Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor would require substance work to rehabilitate and improve the full 40 kms of the trail corridor. Since 2012 various trail assessments and on-site visits have occurred to monitor and assess the trail corridor condition. Over the past 10 years of the partnership agreement, the Salmon and Memekay rivers have slowly changed course, undermining banks along the river creating the need to re-route the Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor further away from the riverbanks, other impacts have resulted from severe winter storms blocking the trail corridor completely.

The Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor is located within the Sayward Forest District Recreation and Working Resource area, the primary resource management company is Western Forest Resource (Sayward/Memekay area), others include Mosaic Resource Management, Komoks First Nations and BC Timber Sales License areas (various contractors). BCHBC NVI has worked with these resource management companies and the Memekay grazing lease holder to understand the resource management priorities and have greatly appreciated the time and support they have offered over the years.

In 2020 BCHBC-NVI applied to the Province of BC, CERIP grant funding program for a substantial grant towards rehabilitating the 40km, Salmon Brewster trail corridor. This application was unsuccessful however the assessments and other information were able to be used for future grant opportunities.

In late 2021 BCHBC NVI approached the Strathcona Regional District expressing a desire to undertake additional improvements of the Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor, in particular works relating to brushing, installing, clearing, excavating, building, transporting, materials and supplies, project management and trail assessments specific to bridge replacement and the crossing of a ravine.

Due to severe storms in spring 2022 and 2022/2023 wildfires, work was somewhat delayed with the project completed March 31st, 2024.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE/ACTIVITIES

The Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor project objectives and activities were to conduct brushing and clearing of the 40km trail, assessment of existing bridge replacement, assessment for construction of a ravine crossing, identification of other trail erosion, drainage issues, and implement any trail improvements within the available budget.

RESULTS

The Back Country Horsemen of BC – North Vancouver Island chapter (BCHBC-NVI) greatly appreciates the funding support of the Strathcona Regional District through Agreement #SRD-22-002. The Salmon Brewster trail corridor experienced a significant 2022 winter blowdown that required certified professional faller and forestry crews to assess and clear several sections of the trail that were impacted by the winter 2022 storms.

BCHBC-NVI has had a partnership working relationship with Strategic Natural Resource (SNR) Consultants, SNR provides a professional faller and trained, skilled wildfire forestry crew to carry out the works and BCHBC-NVI volunteers lead the crews into the various trailheads access points and provide volunteer labor to assist with the clearing of the trail. By utilizing the seasonal firefighting crews in their 'down' time, Strategic Natural Resource Consultants have, in the past, been able to provide a discounted crew rate for community trail project work.

In 2022, several sections of the impacted Salmon Brewster trail corridor were successfully cleared during the spring and summer while the forestry crew was available.

The work plan for 2023 was to begin trail work the 1st week of June, unfortunately a wildfire in the Sayward area diverted the trail crew and with the continued fire rating risk, led to any work on the Salmon Brewster trail corridor being suspended. It was anticipated that late Sept or early October trail work (requiring saws) could occur, however due to the crews working long hours on wildfires throughout the spring, summer, and fall, the SNR wildfire crew was no longer available. The work was delayed until Dec 2023 when 43K Wilderness Solutions (43K) trail crew were available. The 43K contractor is an RSTBC pre-qualified contractor and familiar with the SB Trail Corridor having previously completed a trail inventory and mapping project. Further assessment by BCHBC-NVI volunteers recognized the need for certified professional Faller (Lone Brow Contracting) to remove danger trees and blocked trail sections. The trail project work was completed March 29th, 2024.

BCHBC-NVI engaged with West Coast Mechanical heavy-duty equipment and operators to complete brush cutting works to enable volunteers and crews to access remote trail heads. It is anticipated that this work will provide remote access for five to 10 years before further maintenance will be required.

BCHBC-NVI was able to engage Caliber Bridge and Design Ltd equipment and operator to work late August 2023 to address a drainage issue that had become a safety hazard, this work has been monitored over the winter 2023/24 and appears to have been effective. The work will be monitored in 2024 and 2025 for follow up rehabilitation if required.

In October 2023, BCHBC-NVI volunteers engaged with 43K to conduct a specific trail assessment and to provide financial estimates for the 40km rehabilitation of the Salmon Brewster trail corridor including replacement of an existing bridge and construction of a ravine crossing. This assessment assisted with the Province of BC,

Rural Economic Diversification, and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) grant application submitted in partnership with Strathcona Regional District. The Province of BC announced the award of the REDIP to BCHBC-NVI April 2024 and project planning is underway.

With grant funding support from Strathcona Regional District, BCHBC NVI volunteers' hours and a community discount from Strategic Natural Resource Consultants, the Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor project was completed within budget by March 31st, 2024. The SRD grant has literally cleared the way being ready for the significant Salmon Brewster trail rehabilitation works including drainage, erosion, bridge replacement and a major ravine crossing.

PROJECT FINANCIAL COMMENTS

The final financial report for Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor project SRD22-002 has been submitted to the SRD. The project works was within the approved budget and authorized time frame for completion.

CONCLUSION

The 2022/2023/March 2024 Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor project has literally cleared the way for the 2024-2026 Provincial REDIP Trail rehabilitation, drainage, erosion, bridge replacement and ravine crossing project to begin.

The Back Country Horsemen of BC - North Vancouver Island chapter members wish to express their thanks and appreciation to the Strathcona Regional District, for the ongoing support towards the sustainability of the Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor and Memekay, Pine Marten and Brewster horse camps (recreation sites). Let us know when you can come for a visit, and we'll give you a tour.

North Vancouver Island Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of BC also wishes to acknowledge the many, many volunteer hours that its members contribute to the horse camps, along with trail maintenance and other improvements. The Salmon Brewster trail and horse camps would not be enjoyed by so many without the volunteers' vision, commitment, and enthusiasm.

Salmon Brewster Trail Corridor project

Trail works ()

[1]





















SB Trail Section: Pine 100. Drainage works









Brush Cutting







Special thanks to Strathcona Regional District for the grant funding and BCHBC NVI Chapter members and friends for the donations, fundraising and support! And of course, RSTBC and the Contractors!

We couldn't have done it without you!