

The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative

Phase 1 Report Preliminary Concept Development

November 20, 2006



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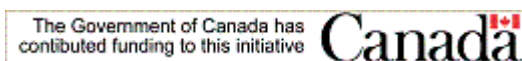
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Acknowledgements

Pilgrims were people wondering, wondering. Whom shall I meet now?

(Anne Carson, 2000, p. 133)

This report is the result of 24 months of hard work and cooperation from a remarkable group of people who in themselves model the very best of what the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway concept envisions. If every trail tells a story, and the richness of a trail is in the experiences it guides us to, then the journey of friendships, dreams, disappointments and rediscovery, of natural wonders, and fine people met along the way are the true measures of its value. To everyone who has contributed to this pilgrimage into the landscape – a journey reflected in this report with plenty of untraveled trail ahead – thank you. You are the local *geniuses of landscape* that writer and naturalist, Barry Lopez, speaks of. (2004, p. 84) You are the “people in whom geography thrives.”

Phil McIntyre-Paul

Salmon Arm, British Columbia

November 20, 2006



Special acknowledgement must go to the members of the original SH2H ad hoc Steering cluster, our regional community and economic development leaders, local trail advocates, the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance board and founding members, and all those who have found themselves “tricked” from the trail into boardrooms and meetings and road journeys to places away from the hills on behalf of the project:

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Finally, a huge word of appreciation to Dave Andrews and the good folks at Community Futures Development Corporation of the Shuswap for taking a risk on the SH2H trail and waterway initiative, and acting as the anchoring proponent organization as the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance formed and took it's first steps. P.S. Dave ~ we'll get you up on that ridge line soon enough!

“We need more wildlands, wildlife, wildlife corridors, mixed-use zones, wild and scenic rivers, and, even urban wilderness. But above all, we need people who know in their bones that these things are important because they are the substrate of our humanity and an anchor for our sanity.”

(David W. Orr, The Nature of Design, 2002, p. 197)

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Section One: Introduction and Background

Imagine an Epic Story: The Great Shuswap Trail Circuit

It has been said every trail tells a story. To the traveller a path speaks of those who have gone before. It tells a story of a people's relationship with the world around them. A trail, like writing, is a kind of etched record of conversation between a people and the landscape. In November 2004, regional stakeholders met to consider a proposal by local trail advocates envisioning a new chapter in this story for the Shuswap – one with epic proportions.

The vision – create an internationally recognized natural trail and waterway network promoting environmental stewardship, sustainable economics, and a reputation for healthy living and recreation.

The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative is an ambitious five-year strategy to create a network of longer distance natural trail and waterway routes for non-motorized recreational travel throughout the Shuswap – including extended opportunity for point-to-point (or hut-to-hut) overnight experiences.

Described by some as an “Appalachian style” network of cross-country hiking, biking, ski, snowshoe, and equestrian trail routes – overnight facilities are envisioned that would link existing accommodations, bed and breakfast operations, campgrounds, and resorts with a series of discrete backcountry wilderness cabins – creating opportunities for a point-to-point (or hut-to-hut) style outdoor travel experience immersed in the natural landscape of the Shuswap. As well, a 160-kilometre water trail has been proposed extending from south of Mabel Lake north to the top of Anstey Arm for canoeists and kayakers.

It is a vision that believes the creation of a well designed, well signed, and well-maintained trail network can be an asset of lasting ecological, social and local economic value.

The Need for a Coordinated Regional Trail Effort

The catalyst for the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative grew out of a series of conversations that had been growing momentum throughout the region. In the spring of 2004, local mountain bike and hiking advocates were discussing the significant body of research, regional studies and public desire for a more clearly defined system of non-motorized natural greenways throughout the Shuswap. Despite significant work underway by both the municipalities of Salmon Arm and Sicamous and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District to enhance the overall creation and management of linear green spaces for non-motorized active travel, it was still perceived that overall success would be limited without a coordinated effort.

With the exception of a few high profile trails (Adams River, Margaret Falls) and locally known “trespass trails” (built but without formal provincial approval), easily accessible trails for hiking and biking throughout the Shuswap continued to be limited. Many local trails are not well known even by long time residents. And without access to the benefit of local knowledge, a four wheel drive vehicle, a VHF radio tuned to local forestry frequencies, and updated geographical information of the backcountry most remain largely inaccessible to the general public.

The closure of the Salmon Arm Forest District office and the elimination of provincial staffing and commitment to recreational resource management had further added to the problem. Forest Recreation Sites and Trails throughout the Shuswap region had been placed in the hands of local organizations or left to the goodwill of users to self-maintain. Several notable organizations met this challenge with considerable success, managing and maintaining trail systems in the region. (Larch Hills Nordic Society, Shuswap Outdoors, the Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of BC) However, a coordinated effort to enhance and maintain non-motorized recreational trails was lacking.

Despite these realities, promotion of the region as a location of natural beauty with an attractive outdoor lifestyle continued to name opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and equestrian riding as a defining feature. For the most part, however, the landscape of the Shuswap remained elusive to non-motorized recreational means of travel.

More recently, however, a renewed call for tourism opportunities within the diverse natural landscape and ecosystems of the province was issued with the announcement of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. A realignment of provincial ministries, staffing priorities, and funding was underway. The creation of a new process for commercial backcountry tourism tenure had been established, and the Okanagan-Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) had been completed with the announcement of significant protected areas under the BC Parks program.

In 2002 the Columbia Shuswap Regional District together with the District of Salmon Arm conducted an extensive study of front and backcountry recreational opportunities. The Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm and Associates, 2002) identified a series of outdoor, nature based recreational opportunities that could be developed as part of a strategy to diversify and enhance tourism in the region. Within this, the potential for a cabin-to-cabin style trail experience was considered and deemed to have high potential within all five regions of the Shuswap. As well, mountain biking, Nordic Skiing and equestrian riding were also identified as having strong potential for growth.

Then in 2003, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District completed the first of its regional parks plans for Area C in the South Shuswap. The plan included a section identifying existing and proposed “linear parks” (trails). Through public consultation, the CSRD had received substantial direction from residence on the lack of and need for non-motorized trails. Similarly, the municipalities of Sicamous and Salmon Arm were seeing movement forward within their greenway initiatives.

Add to this an ambitious proposal put forward by Adventure Okanagan Cooperative/Bearfoot Canada (D. Elzer, 2004) to unite existing trail ways throughout the Okanagan/Shuswap under a single identity called the 5 Rings Trail. This initiative, proposed by small, local eco-tourism operators, included a combined hut-to-hut and trailhead cluster concept to support existing rural eco-tourism and accommodation operators, promote ecological education, and advocate for environmentally sustainable wilderness travel practices.

AOC launched the audacious vision into the commercial land tenure world of outdoor recreational tourism in the Province of British Columbia – proposing the creation of a Southern Interior Trail Council Alliance (D. Elzer, 2005)

and a trail identity that would unite the Okanagan-Shuswap highlands from Osoyoos to Sicamous – the 5 Rings Trail.

With these developments – along with trail based movements in other parts of the Province including mountain bike advances in the Kootenays, North Vancouver, and Whistler; new support for the BC Trails link with the Trans Canada Trail, and the economic study and commitment to rebuild the recently burned Kettle Valley Rail trestles in Southern BC – it seemed clear: the realignment of commitment, resources and staffing expertise encouraging outdoor trail-based recreation and tourism both regionally and provincially presented an important opportunity for the Shuswap.

In November of 2004 representatives from the Shuswap region's non-motorized outdoor recreational and tourism interest groups, along with advocates of the 5 Rings Trail strategy, met with leadership from the Regional District, First Nations, Municipalities, Recreational Organizations and Economic Development agencies in the Shuswap to consider the benefits of a coordinated trails effort. Out of this meeting grew an ad hoc steering group committed to exploring the potential for a regionally networked hut-to-hut trail and waterway system. And in January 2006, that ad hoc steering committee officially launched as the Shuswap Hut & Trail Alliance (more frequently referred to as simply: the Shuswap Trail Alliance.)

Purpose of the Report

Preliminary discussion with key stakeholders and a series of community sessions were conducted in the spring of 2005. Then with the support of Dave Andrews and the Community Futures Development Corporation of the Shuswap funding was obtained from Western Economic Diversification Canada in September 2005 to support further research into the SH2H trail and waterway vision, its viability, and the appetite of local communities to consider such a concept. Additional funding was added through the CSRD's Area E Economic Opportunities Fund allowing the SH2H to consider specific implications for the Sicamous/Area E region as a case study.

The purpose of this report is:

- a) to articulate a workable concept vision for a well designed, signed, and maintained system of natural recreational trails linking the Shuswap watershed – including point-to-point (or hut-to-hut) overnight options.
- b) to assess overall community interest and appetite supporting such a vision.
- c) to explore the economic, social and environmental viability of the vision.

This report considers consultation findings over the past 24 months, demonstrates the wealth of research and resource material currently available to the initiative, explores key issues for the SH2H trail and waterway concept, and provides strategic direction for the next steps in trail way planning.

Methodology and Milestones

The consultation and concept development process has included:

- **creation of an ad hoc steering group** representing leadership from key stakeholder interests,

- **a series of public consultation forums and presentations** in each of the three Shuswap regional areas, the municipalities of Salmon Arm and Sicamous, and hosted by the five Shuswap regional Chambers of Commerce including Chase,
- **stakeholder interviews** both by phone, email and in person,
- **a primary survey of regional tourism operator interest** conducted with support from Thompson River University's School of Tourism graduate, Graham Casselman (2005)
- **a targeted primary survey of local public interest** conducted at the spring Home and Garden Show sponsored by the Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce,
- **ongoing public distribution of information** through local media, email and the web,
- **operation of five community "open house" displays**, including the annual Dragon Boat festival and the 2006 Roots and Blues Festival
- **presentations to regional interest groups and organizations** including recreational, environmental, service, government and community social organizations
- **consultation with provincial land resource management agencies and government**
- **consultation with First Nations leadership** within the four Shuswap Nation band within the region
- **consultation with regional and municipal government and planning staff**
- **research and interviews with existing trail and hut-to-hut systems** in BC, Canada, the US and Internationally (this included a targeted case study of three hut-to-hut trail systems in Alaska, Colorado and New Zealand)
- **field studies to inventory, plot and assess route potential** within the Shuswap watershed region with a starting focus on the CSRD Areas C, E, and F, and the municipalities of Sicamous and Salmon Arm
- **extensive secondary research** into existing land management studies and plans, environmental guidelines, habitat impact data, economic impacts, social benefits and challenges, and best practices in the design, maintenance and management of regional trail systems

Additional Milestones

In reality, the process of consultation quickly revealed an idea that was already in motion. Based on consultation results during the first 12 months (2005) demonstrating consistently high community support, significant trail development plans already underway in the region, readiness by core stakeholder organizations to work together, and direct encouragement from provincial land resource management, project *consultation and research* has evolved into project *planning and implementation* during the past 12 months (2006).

By leveraging additional community resources, the steering cluster was able to advance several objectives that warranted early implementation. The result has been the achievement of additional milestones outside the original scope of the Phase 1 objectives within a 24-month period. These include:

- **The creation of a dedicated website presence** for promotion, communication, and feedback – including sustained upkeep – by local trails advocate, builder and web designer, Jim Maybee. See: <http://www.shuswaptrails.com/huttohut.htm>
- **Incorporation of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance under the non-profit societies act**, as a forum to leverage common knowledge, resources and long-term sustainability for non-motorized recreational trails
- **Coordination and set-up of a dedicated GIS/Mapping station** accessible to Trail Alliance partners with GIS/Mapping consultant, Ivan Casselman. Industry compatible mapping software has been purchased (ESRI ArcView) allowing mapping to be prepared in exchangeable shape file formats. Initial mapping projects include Larch Hills Traverse, Rubberhead Mountain Bike Trail system and research for interactive website mapping proposal.
- **Successful approval of the Larch Hills Traverse and Rubberhead Mountain Bike Trail Pilot Project** with Dave Andrews (Community Futures Development Corporation of the Shuswap): including route plotting, mapping and development planning for the 30+ kilometre Larch Hills Traverse Trail between Salmon Arm and Sicamous, plus 9 km addition of Mountain Bike Trails in the Rubberhead (North Canoe) area, ongoing stakeholder consultation, and successful application and Section 57 approval with the provincial Recreational Sites and Trails office (MTSA) in Revelstoke.
- **Successful approval of the JCP Trail Crew program** with Services Canada (HRSD) for a 10-person trail crew starting August 2006 running for 6 months. Negotiations have anticipated a potential four year JCP cycle. Dave Andrews of Community Futures managed the application and negotiation process with Ted Crouch of Services Canada, Salmon Arm.
- **Set-up of Trailhead Information Sites** at each of the regional tourism information centres operated by the local Chambers of Commerce, as well as sites at other retail and community organizations.
- **Initiation of a series of introductory hikes** hosted by the Shuswap Hospice Society profiling four of the proposed trail connections within the Shuswap Hut and Trail initiative.
- **Preliminary design work on integrated signage standards and identity imaging**, including consultation with graphic designer, Colette St. Amour, and in-kind signage commitments from Len Sept of LA Signs.
- **Assembly of Sicamous/Area E trail advocates** to communicate progress, build local involvement and guide project implementation. This group represents the first move toward the creation of sub-regional trail clusters within the Shuswap Trail Alliance.
- **Exploratory pilot hut site field sessions in the North Queest Gorge** area, resulting in four potential sites for further consideration in the 2006/7 season.
- **Gathering of Inner Shuswap (Blind Bay/White Lake) trail advocates** in liaison with Carmen Massey and Paul Heckendorn to consider White Lake area route potential, viability and connections. Established

commitment to work in cooperation with CSRD Parks Planning office to plot and link backcountry trail routes between Herald Park and Blind Bay.

- **Liaison with Jim Cooperman (North Shuswap) exploring Lee Creek Bluffs trail proposal** as a link in North Shuswap Trail section. Preliminary route reconnaissance led May 2006.
- **Further research into existing habitat impact and wildlife management guidelines:** several route sections present significant wildlife values requiring assessment and strategies to ensure minimal impact and maximum safety for both habitat and humans.
- **Continued liaison with Provincial Land resource ministries** including Terry MacDonald and the Okanagan/Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan Monitoring Committee, Ron Routledge (Ministry of Environment), Fred Thiessen (MTSA and our Integrated Land Management Bureau contact), and Ken Gibson (MTSA Recreational Sites and Trails Officer.)
- **Preparation of regional discussion paper and presentation/meeting** with CSRD Tourism Committee, including Shuswap regional directors.
- **Solicitation of formal stakeholder endorsement** including the District of Sicamous, City of Salmon Arm, and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District.
- **Research of trail development costing and budget planning:** includes draft budget by proposed route section for advance consultation and plotting, construction, and on-going maintenance.
- **Preparation of draft funding sponsorship bulletins targeting major fundraising launch (Winter 2006)** for discussion and advance distribution.
- **Successful endorsement by the Salmon Arm Accommodation Association** and a commitment to direct 20% of the proposed hotel room tax to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance initiative.
- **Liaison and coordination of trail information booths** at the Shuswap Dragon Boat Festival and the Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Festival promoting second phase implementation and sponsorship.
- **Coordination and assembly of materials for Photoscene's Annual Community Calendar** to profile the Hut and Trail Initiative through regional trail images, sponsored by Tony Lewis.
- **Follow-up route exploration of the proposed Anstey Highland Route** with John Coffey. Following the successful completion of the Larch Hills Traverse application, renewed focus has turned to routes north of Sicamous through the 2006 summer season.

Section Two: Building the Concept – Connecting the Shuswap

Founding Vision and Goals

In November 2004 a draft proposal presented a starting vision for the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative intended to inspire discussion and feedback. (P. McIntyre-Paul, 2004) The following four-point vision was proposed:

- **To create an integrated, internationally recognized hut-to-hut trail and waterway system** for self-propelled, four-season nature-based travel in the Shuswap; **founded on principles of ecological integrity and human connection** within a sustained wilderness landscape;
- **To expand self-propelled, four-season, nature-based recreation and learning opportunities** for the novice, intermediate and experienced wilderness traveler – where “self-propelled” includes (though is not necessarily limited to) hiking, mountain biking, canoe and kayaking, skiing, snow-shoeing and equestrian travel; **with extended overnight capacity** both in fully self-sufficient and/or professionally guided and/or catered tent and hut-to-hut facilities;
- **To link a series of smaller, multi-day trail circuits** into a longer and more ambitious multi-week circumnavigation of the Shuswap highland plateau and lake system – one conceivable in a single extended venture, but more likely experienced as a series of return visits over time;
- **And to connect the Shuswap with a wider integrated hut-to-hut destination trail and waterway** system spanning the southern interior British Columbia mountain trench from Osoyoos through the Okanagan and Monashee to the Shuswap and over to Revelstoke within the Five Rings Trail strategy. (D. Elzer, 2004)

Foundational goals . . .

This vision of an integrated hut-to-hut trail and waterway system for the Shuswap further identified five foundational goals. . .

- **to build a multi-stakeholder partnership** of first nations leadership, nature-based/self-propelled guides and tourism operators, recreational users (both individuals and clubs), environmental organizations, industry stakeholders, tourism alliances and destination marketing organizations, community economic development organizations, municipalities and regional districts, and other vested community stakeholders
- **to promote principles of ecological integrity and human connection** within a sustained wilderness landscape where the natural capital¹ of the regions eco-systems is awarded an equal or greater value of importance in the overall review of assets and capital;²

¹ Natural Capital refers to an emerging approach in business that includes “ecosystem services” on the economic balance sheet. It is a concept gaining recognition as companies discover that making resources more productive not only increases ecological protection but can also improve profitability and competitiveness. See *A Road Map for Natural Capitalism*, by Amory Lovins, L. Hunter Lovins, and Paul Hawken. The Harvard Business Review, May-June 1999.

² See also the Five Rings Trail “Bioreserve” concept. Adventure Okanagan Cooperative/Bearfoot Canada

- **to create an internationally acclaimed destination** of authentic, four-season nature based travel and natural encounters, realized through partnership within the 5 Rings Trail bio-reserve system (D. Elzer, 2004)
- **to leverage a long-term vision of community economic development** measurable in stable local employment and the retention of regionally based business operations related to nature-based travel and a hut-to-hut trail and waterway system;
- **to build a 2011+ plan for long-term management** driven by sound business principles that factor natural capital assets into the bottom line calculation of sustainable operation;
- **to commit to a continuous review and renewal** of environmental and socially sound hut-to-hut trail management, becoming international leaders in the policy and practice of recreational, nature-based travel management and planning;

The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Experience: Creating Wilderness Sacred Spaces

“We believe that there is a great deal of pressure for resource extraction, to meet human physical needs (and wants), that is not adequately balanced by recognition of human dependency upon a healthy global ecosystem. Creating an atmosphere for learning and positive social interaction, we intend to foster in hut users a strong sense of personal responsibility for natural systems and wild lands.”

(The Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association, 2004, p. 3)

In addition to the creation of a trail and waterway system, the SH2H initiative has named the inclusion of linked accommodations as a key concept within the system. This includes creating sections where a hut-to-hut style experience would be available. Further explorations into the potential challenges and opportunities of wilderness style hut systems present a compelling vision for consideration in the Shuswap region.

This initial draft report of findings acknowledges several core sources of inspiration: the Adventure Okanagan/Bearfoot Canada 5 Rings Trail Strategy (D. Elzer, 2004), the Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association (AMWHA, 2004), and the Colorado 10th Mountain Hut Division. (J. Ayotte, 2005) Leadership from each of these initiatives were selfless in sharing their time, knowledge, passion and above all – their vision. The following sketch of a regional Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway system is indebted to these resources.

A local vision for the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut system includes the following goals:

- **design a series of linked overnight wilderness hut-to-hut routes** that anchor inspiring natural surroundings, journeys that allow for a sense of physical accomplishment, and comfortable and attractive cabins,
- **create a dual-option management plan and infrastructure** that can attract both hosted wilderness travel experiences as well as rustic self-catered wilderness travellers.

- **create opportunity for inspired leadership that utilizes the hut-to-hut system** as a means of healthy encounter within the natural landscape
- **build a lasting economic base** for maintenance, renewal, adaptation, and ecological conservation based on an appropriate mix of public and guided group bookings
- **plan for private huts to integrate within the system** – The 10th Colorado Mountain Hut Division (J. Ayotte, 2005) has demonstrated that the non-profit society management of the 29 hut system can successfully include privately tenured huts within the system. 15 of the huts are owned and managed by other private and non-profit groups. A standard of design and amenity is adhered to. The Alliance would manage all bookings through a centralized system. Percentage requirements for public and private reservations each season would apply to all huts within a system. In essence, a private operator would be entering into a type of agreement of tenure for services with the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance.

(See the section titled Huts: Natural Design and Materials, and the section titled Trailhead Destination Operators, for a detailed discussion of this concept.)

Geographic Boundaries: The Shuswap Watershed Region

In the early stages of the consultation it was articulated that the best way of describing regional boundaries for any integrated system of trail routes needed to favour the flow of water rather than the boundaries of governance and industry. While the primary routes considered within this report fall within Areas C, E and F, Salmon Arm and Sicamous of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, neighbouring efforts such as the Gordon Dale Memorial Trail extending from the Enderby Cliffs to Three Valley Gap, the Kingfisher Interpretive Centre and the Shuswap River system connecting with Mabel Lake, and the broader 5 Rings Trail strategy linking trails throughout the Okanagan/Shuswap are an important consideration in the overall vision and viability of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway initiative. These trail initiatives fall within the natural flow of the Shuswap water system from Greenbush Lake to the mouth of the South Thompson.

A Regional Story Defined by Water

The Shuswap Watershed is a region defined by water. It once marked the meeting point between melting ice blocks in the Okanagan and Thompson valleys during the end of the last ice age. Prior to that the area was encased in an incomprehensible blanket of moving ice. The remnants of those blocks today – the 340 plus kilometre shoreline of interior British Columbia's Shuswap Lake – is fed by a flow from glacial ice caps, high altitude snow falls, and the rain shadow benefit of being just that little bit higher than the arid landscape a few kilometres west.

Rarely seen by those who stay close to the lakeshore and highway, the view from above reveals deep fiords with distinctive rolling meadowland plateaus that have been shaped by these passing rivers of glacial ice. Now the fiords are home to a web of streams tracing the hillsides before making a collective exit into the great Thompson/Fraser watershed to the Pacific.

Along this mighty legacy of flowing water migrate the stunning annual salmon runs to their ancestral source in the Shuswap. Along the shores and hillsides stand the great water pumping forests of pine, cedar, hemlock, spruce, fir, and dramatic larch.

And in those years notable by the water's absence, climax fires and devastating beetle infestations have taken hold. The regions story is a dynamic and steadily changing one in which water dominates.

Traced to its source, the Shuswap watershed is born somewhere within Joss pass, it's namesake Joss Mountain in the Sawtooth Range to the West and Mount Davis, Greenbush Lake, and the crowning icecap of Blanket Glacier to the East. From here the now accumulating waters of the Shuswap River work their way south along the imposing Monashee Mountains on the East and Tsuius Mountain on the West. After passing Monashee Provincial Park and the Specturm Falls Trail on the East the Shuswap sources 590 metre deep Sugar Lake.

At the dam and Brenda Falls on Sugar Lake's outflow, the Shuswap River continues south with increased vigour toward the community of Cherryville where it veers west into the agricultural pastures paralleling Highway 6. Shortly after the Shuswap River Hatchery comes the first of the classic paddle launches about four kilometres from the community of Reiswig. Here the Shuswap takes a new bend north through Shuswap Falls before meeting up with Lawson Creek.

The Shuswap River now travels north creating a classic paddle route to its mouth into Mabel Lake. This is the beginning of the great Shuswap Water Trail described later in this report. The flow of Shuswap water now links Mabel Lake with the communities of Ashton Creek, Enderby, Grindrod, and Sicamous before spilling into the remnant glacial footprint of Shuswap Lake.

Four distinct arms connected by the Cinnemousun Narrows make the Shuswap a most distinct lake in a region known for its long linear north/south fiords. Here, four sprawling arms reach west/east and north connecting the communities of Sicamous, Salmon Arm, Canoe, Tappen, Seymour Arm, Anglemont, Celista, Scotch Creek, Blind Bay and Sorrento, Squilax, and through the brief stretch of the little Shuswap River into Little Shuswap Lake and the town of Chase and the beginning of the South Thompson River.

Boasting the longest freshwater shoreline in the province at just over 340 kilometres, the inviting waters and beckoning mountains of the four arms make the Shuswap internationally recognized for it's huge floating inventory of holiday bed space. It has attracted an inventory of houseboats unrivalled throughout North America.

Fed by the Eagle River from the East, Shuswap and the Salmon River from the South, Anstey and Seymour Rivers in the North, the great Adams River and Adams Lake toward the West, and an abundance of creeks and perennial streams, the Shuswap lake ecology has evolved to sustain one of the great wonders of the natural world as cycles of Salmon journey each year up the Fraser and Thompson Rivers to seek out ancestral spawning beds along each of the lakes many water veins. The flow of water within this great web of Shuswap waterways is both central nervous system and lifeblood for the region. Around it the values, culture, language and civilization of the Shuswap First Nation have grown.

Despite crossing the boundaries of four band councils, three regional district governments, three provincial forest districts, two provincial environmental regions, 19 towns, four distinct municipal councils, three perceived tourism

regions, and seven chambers of commerce – the flow of water within the Shuswap region makes no distinction setting its own boundaries within the landscape.

It is guided by this story of water that the geographic scope of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative draws both inspiration, direction and boundary.

Shuswap First Nations: An Ancient Weave of Walkways

“...the obvious must be stated, trails provided access to most of the values that belonged to Aboriginal culture, these included, botanicals, ochre sites, sacred sites, hunting areas, berry picking areas, trade, and all related uses within a landscape. Trails were the primary path by which Aboriginal people’s relationship with their landscape was defined.”

(Running Horse Consulting, 2001, p. 12)

The idea for a regional system of connecting trails and waterways is not new. Consultation with local Shuswap First Nations leadership and elders reveals a region known for its vast web of traditional walking routes. (RHC, 2001; A. Artz, interview, Nov. 3, 2004; M. Thomas, meeting, Jan. 18, 2005; S. Jules, presentation, Oct. 24, 2006)

These were the first routes of human contact and wider relationship within the surrounding landscape. Their archaeological significance extends well beyond being simply corridors of transport. They provide the tangible means of connection for the Shuswap First Nations to their cultural, economic and spiritual interdependence with the land and the natural ecology of the region.

Local aboriginal leadership has described revitalizing these routes as a contemporary means of:

- exercising land title,
- maintaining access to traditional hunting and botanical sites,
- guarding sacred areas,
- creating new economic opportunities through ecological and cultural tourism,
- and educating a new generation of leadership to the culture, traditions and values of their nation heritage.

These are benefits acknowledged by both the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2006) who recognize the ability of well designed cultural experiences that invite outside participation to reinforce cultural identity, strengthen local economic sustainability, encourage traditions, and preserve heritage. (p. 8); and the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (ATBC, 2005).

For these reasons, partnership with the Shuswap First Nations leadership is recognized as a priority for this initiative. It is a commitment that honours the legacy of Shuswap First Nation trails in the region, recognizes contemporary aboriginal governance of Shuswap territory, and advocates on behalf of the Shuswap First Nation’s exercise of land title.

The Shuswap Trail Alliance understands, however, that the formal decision to leverage the resources of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance rests with each of the four Shuswap Nation Band Councils within the region

defined by the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative (SH2H). This region essentially spans the flow of the Shuswap watershed falling within the the Adams Lake, Neskonlith, Little Shuswap and Spallumcheen Indian Bands.

A Contemporary Opportunity to Leverage Traditional Land Title

At present, the Aboriginal Interest Department of the Little Shuswap Indian Band and members of the Neskonlith Indian Band have met with the SH2H Steering Cluster expressing favourable support for the initiative. The Aboriginal Interest Department of the Little Shuswap Indian Band has actively encouraged creating natural trails in the region, seeing them as an opportunity:

- to exercise land title through contemporary means,
- as a source of economic revenue through tourism and recreation ventures,
- and as an opportunity to educate young adults in the traditional culture and values of the Squilax Secwepemc people through contemporary employment as interpreters and guides

The Little Shuswap Indian Band have conducted an extensive archaeological and oral history study of significant trails within their territory confirming and mapping what amounts to a huge network of traditional trails. (RHC, 2001) The LSIB now wants to link trails from Quaaout Lodge to this traditional network, including a proposed link through to their joint venture at the lodge based on Grizzly Lake. Through their Aboriginal Interest Department, the LSIB has taken a leadership role in directing the early efforts of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative, indicating a desire to be involved in any proposal development that arises. (A. Artz, interview, Nov. 3, 2004)

Chief Art Anthony, Neskonlith Indian Band, joined Steering meetings held early in 2005 at the Switzmalph Cultural Centre offices, expressing a willingness to bring proposals before the NIB Council. In addition, the value of the proposed West Bay Trail was discussed. (Steering Meeting, n.d., 2005)

Phone conversation and follow-up messages with Chief Wayne Christianson of the Spallumcheen Indian Band have been held and documented. Mapping and proposals were requested and sent. Further feedback from the band was not received, however. Follow-up has continued including correspondence with Loretta Eustache, the Band's natural resources officer.

Correspondence, phone conversation and a meeting with Chief Nelson Leon and the Council of the Adams Lake Indian Band have taken place. The need for further discussions was acknowledged with relation to trails within the Adams Lake Indian Band's areas of interest. At the time of reporting, the Trail Alliance was not involved in trail projects in these areas, but is committed to supporting the Adams Lake Indian Band in it's desire to develop trails. This includes the West Bay Trail proposal (see next section.)

Contacts with each of the four local Band offices are maintained through email, and include standing invitations to participate in all meetings of the Alliance. Follow-up meetings with the Chiefs and councils of each band are now needed to establish working priorities for the Shuswap Trail Alliance that advance aboriginal trail interests.

The West Bay Trail Proposal

In 2002 Adams Lake Indian Band commissioned a feasibility study to consider the creation of a trail linking the western side of Salmon Arm Bay. Benefits and opportunities to the Bands included recreation, healthy life style,

tourism and commercial opportunities, environmental education, interpretation and wildlife viewing. The single most important factor for constructing the trail, however, was named as safety. (C. Nash, 2003, p. 3)

The West Bay Trail feasibility study indicates both the Adams Lake and Neskonlith Bands both recognized the benefits of a trail in their land use plans, and that they were willing to donate lands, labour and finances. (C. Nash, 2003, p. 3) In interviews with the City of Salmon Arm during the SH2H consultation, it was made clear that the City would most certainly commit to supporting this proposal and to extending a trail to where the Band and City properties meet. (C. Bannister, interview, Feb. 2, 2006)

To date, no further progress on the proposed West Bay Trail appears to have occurred. Enquiries would suggest a combination of workloads by each of the two band's land resource leadership, and the significant costs of development have kept progress on hold for the time being.

The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance is prepared to support the Adams Lake and Neskonlith Band's desire to establish a trail along the western side of Salmon Arm Bay, and if desired, help with the work of assembling stakeholders, funding, trail design, plotting and construction.

It is recognized, however, that the lead proponent of the initiative must come from within the First Nations community. To this end, continued correspondence with the bands and the Shuswap Cultural Centre continue.

A Commitment to Support Aboriginal Values

Earlier phone conversations and a spring 2006 meeting with the Adams Lake Indian Band council resulted in a request for further documentation to be prepared demonstrating clear commitment to aboriginal values. Of particular importance were:

- ensuring the Shuswap First Nation's assertion of rights
- assessment of impact on traditional medicines and food, and opportunity to preserve traditional areas
- assessment of overall impact from increased occupation through garbage, dumping and sewage
- assessment of environmental benefits and impacts
- concern over the potential increase of motorized access and damage
- assessment of economic benefits for the Bands

(ALIB Council, meeting, April 4, 2006)

With the completion of the Phase 1 report, many of these issues have been addressed – at least within the framework of broad working principles. This report now needs to be presented to the region's Band councils for further discussion and direction.

Supporting the Switzmalph Cultural Centre Vision

Of particular importance has been the positive involvement of the Switzmalph Cultural Society's efforts. Through the Shuswap Cultural Centre vision, Neskonlith Elder, Dr. Mary Thomas articulated the need to "preserve and enhance the Shuswap language, culture, and to bridge understanding and cooperation between Native and Non-Native peoples." (The Vision, n.d.) The vision includes offering experiential learning programs based on native

culture, healing, environment, community watershed stewardship, lake and foreshore stewardship, and the 1998 Forest Fire (The Concept, n.d.)

The preservation of traditional trails is an important part of the Shuswap Cultural Centre vision. To date, a trail has been re-established from the Shuswap Cultural Centre winter village site to the Salmon Arm Bird Sanctuary. It recognizes the important role trails play as a passage of encounter within the natural environment. An extension of this trail linking the west bay and Salmon Arm would establish the Cultural Centre as a focal hub for cultural preservation, environmental education and protection. Trails have also been considered linking with traditional lands on Mount Ida.

Working as partner with the Shuswap Trail Alliance is seen by the Switzmalph Cultural Society as a means toward preserving ancestral trails and in turn the culture and values of the Shuswap people. (S. Jules, presentation, October 24, 2006)

Increased Potential through the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy

In November 2005 the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia released their Cultural Tourism Strategy for BC. (ATBC, 2005) Despite significant challenges within the province for aboriginal tourism operators, the study concludes there is “considerable potential for growth in British Columbia.” (ATABC, 2005, p. iv)

The value of building appropriate cultural learning experiences around natural trails within the Shuswap is seen as a critical component of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative. It is one of the primary benefits that can help to address how a regional network of pathways can be viable in the long-term. Experience driven recreational and tourism opportunities can provide both economic benefit to local aboriginal communities, operators and bands, and generate the necessary finances to support an ongoing maintenance and marketing program.

Driven by leadership within the aboriginal community, the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Strategy outlines the results of an extensive study and planning process. The “blueprint” names strategies necessary for creating a vibrant Aboriginal Tourism industry. These provide important direction to any Shuswap regional trail initiatives.

Of particular note, the strategy suggests that development of local aboriginal experiences for tourism should be:

- market-driven,
- operate according to existing travel trade rules of engagement,
- be respectful and responsive to the protocol of First Nations and their cultures,
- operate in partnership with the mainstream tourism industry,
- and take advantage of existing programs for business support.

(ATBC, 2005, p. vi)

The SH2H initiative has identified recreational and tourism use within the proposed trail network as a core condition for producing enough economic revenue to support the system over the long-term. The implication is that any lasting social, environmental and economic benefit from the creation of natural trails in the Shuswap region will need to draw on the support of existing mainstream tourism operators in the region.

According to the ATBC Blueprint (2005), “increased market interest in Aboriginal Cultural experiences could be most effectively tapped into if the **cultural element provides an enhancement to the experience** rather than be the primary focus, in order to cater to a larger audience.” (p. vi) It is believed the partnership approach proposed by the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative could help to leverage just such an audience potential.

Building Trust and Honouring Cultural Protection

Within the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Strategy a core component is the development of cultural protection protocols. These practises are intended to ensure respect for First Nations cultures, languages and heritage values. (ATBC, 2005, p. vii) This is a critical step for any trail-based development within the Shuswap initiative.

Authenticity is an essential value. Any experience created within a trail system must be true to the communities involved. This is not only critical for the health of the local community, but also for its viability as an experience that will attract others to participate. Tourism potential is enhanced where people sense they are welcomed into an honest experience of local cultural significance, especially where that experience is seen to strengthen the local culture and community. (R. McIntosh, C. Goeldner, 1990)

The SH2H initiative, in committing to a partnership approach, must recognize that given the historic context of First Nations rights and abuse over the past century, authenticity will require a relationship of trust. Building this trust will take time and must be based on clear demonstration of long-term commitment by all partners.

To this end, the Shuswap Trail Alliance must recognize the cultural significance of the natural landscape and ecology to the Shuswap First Nation, and commit to working with the aboriginal community toward preserving this cultural wisdom.

A key challenge will be the pressure of current funding deadlines and opportunities, and the pressure of other stakeholders, to make timely decisions quickly. The time needed to build a relationship of trust between First Nations and Non-First Nations partners can often be overwhelmed by immediate pressure to make quick decisions. Having appropriate protocols already in place to consider and protect cultural values may help to guide the way through these pressures.

Therefore, when developing trails and trail-based experiences, it is recommended Shuswap First Nations and Non-First Nations leadership recognize and implement appropriate cultural protection protocols. It is also recommended these protocols be created with direction from wider resources including the Aboriginal Tourism Association.

Furthermore, it is suggested the combined organizational resources of the Switzmalph Cultural Society and the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance are well positioned to help coordinate this effort cooperatively.

On Walk-About through Layers of History

The region’s trail ways reveal a rich layering of history. According to the Running Horse Consulting report drafted for Little Shuswap Indian Band (2001), in 1864 Robert Smith and William Ladner most likely appropriated existing aboriginal trails in the North Shuswap establishing a route to what would be known as the Big Bend Gold Rush in

the Columbia Valley. Much of the region was surveyed during this time under the noted Walter Moberly whose name still lingers on prominent landmarks such as Moberly Lookout.

While the Big Bend Gold Rush was short lived, trapping, homesteads and farming continued to grow throughout the region. A quick survey of local trail knowledge reveals an abundance of “trappers” trails, “homestead” sites linked by pack trails, and old cabin timbers, though many of the actual routes are lost to overgrowth.

In the 1920's a new layer of trail history was added with the advent of the Dominion Forest Service fire protection routes. And many of these are likely to have adapted or cleared earlier aboriginal pathways. (RHC, 2001) In turn, these Forestry tracks soon became important routes into the highland meadows for summer sheep pasture.

First Nations, trapping, mining, forestry, shepherds – to some extent it is impossible to consider a “new” trail in the Shuswap. It is a well-walked landscape through a many-layered history.

An Ecological Pathway: “Weave It Green”

“The greatest of human discoveries in the future will be the discovery of human intimacy with all those other modes of being that live with us on this planet, inspire our art and literature, reveal that numinous world whence all things come into being, and with which we exchange the very substance of life.”

(Thomas Berry, The Great Work, 1999, p. 149)

The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway is rooted in a belief that – carefully designed – natural pathways can promote an environmental ethic, sustainable economics, and a reputation for healthy living and recreation. Quite literally: they can help us to weave the Shuswap green.

To this end, development, maintenance, and travel within the trail system supports a critical rethinking of current practises, advocating a “green” approach to outdoor recreation and travel. Within this framework, the natural capital (P. Hawken., A. Lovins, L.H. Lovins, 1999) of the region's eco-systems – “the sum total of the ecological systems that support life, different from human-made capital in that natural capital cannot be produced by human activity” (p. 151) – is awarded an equal or greater value of importance in determining how things are done.

Through thoughtful design, construction and management the SH2H has the potential to secure natural green space and habitat corridors, manage impacts in sensitive and high value areas, establish extended travel corridors for wildlife, retain green zones of natural water efficiency, mitigate erosion, introduce the public to the regions diverse ecology, and inspire a new generation of leadership committed to saving our tremendously threatened biosphere.

It also walks the fine line of balance. A new trail can also inadvertently open sensitive habitat to unsustainable human impact, negatively impact and displace wildlife, and encourage increased carbon emissions through the increased vehicle travel to and between trailheads.

Habitat Protection: A Consultation List Topper

Throughout the course of the phase 1 consultation period, concern for potential habitat impact and protection was consistently raised as a top issue. Each route within the proposed trail network presents a very different set of

ecological issues. Where the environmental objectives of one trail support a trail's ability to secure green space (e.g. Larch Hills Traverse), another route may demand more rigorous attention to assessing environmental risk and whether a trail is sustainable (e.g. The Anstey Highland Route).

Much of the region's landscape can be described as "working forest," however, with few areas not accessed by forest service roads (FSRs). Recreation studies in the past have suggested the term "semi-wilderness" can be used in only a few places where a person could achieve solitude in nature for an hour, maybe two. (J. Delay, interview, Jan. 20, 2005; J. Delay, 1999) The implication, then, is that in most parts of the Shuswap, discussion of establishing a non-motorized trail route implies reducing impact on the environment in proximity to the trail.

One proposed route location that warrants closer consideration, however, and may in fact suggest increased conservation objectives, is the Anstey Highland Route traversing the Anstey Range to Anstey Glacier. During on-site public interviews conducted at Askews in Sicamous (Schneider Wood, L. Dec 13, 2005 & Jan. 7, 2006), of the five top issues raised concern for impact on Grizzly habitat was perceived as a priority. LRMP zoning for the east Anstey includes Mountain Caribou and Grizzly Resource Management Zoning (RMZ) objectives. In this area, a scientific environmental assessment should be conducted to determine appropriate levels of recreational sustainability.

Other identified routes with particular habitat priorities for further assessment include Crowfoot/Moberly Mountain (sub-alpine grassland meadows, historic values) and Salmon Arm Bay/Tappen/Sunnybrae (riparian, nesting).

Mountain Caribou Impact Assessment

Particular attention is being directed toward potential Mountain Caribou impact within the Revelstoke Planning Unit (PU3-A) related to the Queest/Anstey Ridge Route proposals. Similarly, potential Grizzly habitat impact and interface are a concern within this same route area.

With the research of the Mountain Caribou Science Team now complete (MCST, 2006), a full review of findings and recommended management options are now being circulated for stakeholder input. The Salmon Arm portion of the PU3-A Mountain Caribou planning unit observes smaller sub-groups of the larger herd, hence current management is deemed potentially inadequate. *Assisted long-term sustaining recovery* options will require reduced forest harvesting in areas of the Anstey Range, and *self-sustaining* option would require elimination of forest harvesting in designated areas. (p. 7)

The teams' recommendations indicate restrictions to motorized winter recreation will likely result in recovery. As well, the northern end of the Anstey Range is recommended for winter closure to heli-ski operation. No backcountry skiing restrictions are currently suggested, though reference to potential closure to several areas experiencing increased use was noted. (MCST, 2006, p. 5) It is likely this will include areas within the Anstey Range, confirming acknowledgement by the SH2H initiative that further environmental assessment to determine reasonable summer and winter non-motorized carrying capacity will be needed for the Anstey Highland Route. Again, findings may lean in favour of more substantial access restrictions over designation as a long distance mountain traverse.

Resource contacts to date include Bruce McLellan (MoF Revelstoke), Fred Thiessen and Ken Gibson (MTSA), Ron Routledge (MoEnvironment), and Jim Cooperman (SEAS). Preparatory work has also been done researching guidelines for environmental assessment standards and requirements. Key route sections (e.g. the Queest/Anstey Highlands and the West Bay Trail) will require further Environmental study. Follow-up is required.

In addition, research and field reconnaissance to date would suggest several route sections of the proposed trail system could serve adaptive research objectives related to the interface between non-motorized recreational travel and key wildlife populations. (MoF, 2000)

Environmental Planning Strategies

A review of existing research and best practises has presented workable strategies for many of these areas, including those where more in-depth environmental assessment is needed. As well, on-going consultation with the Ministry of Environment, the Okanagan-Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan, the Integrated Land Management Bureau, and the Provincial Recreational Sites and Trails Office continues to guide and define working strategies.

Of particular note are four resources to be utilized in assessment and advanced route planning. These are:

- **Wildlife Guidelines for Backcountry Tourism/Commercial Recreation** (Ministry of Environment, Government of British Columbia, 2006) – developed “to ensure that backcountry recreation activities are conducted in a manner that does not compromise the current distribution of wildlife, the sustainability of their populations, or the integrity of their habitats.”
- **Effects of Recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife** (G. Joslin & H. Youmans, coordinators, 1999; MCTWS, n.d.) – Developed by the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society (MCTWS), a professional association of wildlife biologists, the series of documents compiles and reviews over 1300 scientific studies considering the effects of increased recreational activities to wildlife on public lands and waterways. The studies formed the basis of the original interim B.C. Ministry of Environment Guidelines for Backcountry Tourism and Commercial Recreation, and provide one of the most comprehensive syntheses of existing literature on recreational impacts within the natural landscape.
- **Okanagan-Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan** (OSLRMP, 2001) – a strategic document outlining land resource management objectives for 93% of the Crown land within the Okanagan-Shuswap region. The OSLRMP should be considered a core land resource management document in planning trail routes or hut sites within the defined Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative.
- **Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind: A Handbook for Trail Planners** (Trails and Wildlife Task Force, Colorado State Parks, and Hellmund Associates, 1998) – designed to “help trail planners and builders balance the benefits of creating trails and being stewards of nature, especially wildlife.” (p. 1) A compendium of key issues, case studies, and “rules of thumb” for considering the complex relationship between humans and wildlife when planning for natural trails.

Local First Nation’s leadership, naturalists clubs, and ecology expertise (Salmon River Watershed Round Table, Living by Water, Shuswap Environmental Action Society, Turtle Island Earth Stewards) are recognized as key partners in this endeavour.

Several guiding strategies have emerged in the first stage of environmental planning of the SH2H:

- **adopt a community development approach** to trail and hut site planning that involves all stakeholders, and proactively assumes a roll of advocacy on behalf of the natural environment: listen, include, work together;
- **conduct wildlife inventories** where information is deficient;
- **build adaptive management strategies** where impact outcomes are uncertain – and ensure sufficient resources are in place to monitor and adapt as necessary; (MoF, 2000)
- **utilize sound contemporary trail design**, construction techniques, and educational tools (signs, promotional materials, interpretive services) in order to minimize erosion and habitat impacts, direct recreational traffic, limit unwanted use, and mitigate risks;
- **train and utilize professional guides within sensitive alpine regions** – concentrating travel to small guided groups minimizes the duration of human interaction, ensures safety, monitors wildlife impacts, and polices for fire and vandalism. It also creates business opportunity for locally based operators and guides.

Interestingly, as a result of research and interviews related to recreational guidelines for habitat protection – and clear gaps in current knowledge – a new potential benefit of the proposed SH2H initiative has emerged in the opportunity to conduct advanced research on the impacts and appropriate management between non-motorized outdoor recreation and wildlife. Opportunities might include student or career placement fieldwork projects, post-secondary graduate research, and ministry funded research grants.

As well, there is an opportunity to link with BC Parks and Ecological Reserves throughout the region, increasing the benefits of getting people immersed and aware of the land in which they live.

Honouring the Nature of Play

“What are we trying to do? Were we trying to show off? Were we trying to kill ourselves? – No! We wanted to inhale and breathe life again. We were rebelling against an existence which human kind has forced upon itself. We were rebelling against an existence full of distorted values, against an existence where a man is judged by the size of his living-room, by the amount of chromium on his car. But here we were ourselves again: simple and pure. Friends in the mountains.”

(Hans Gmoser, 1932-2006. As cited by Chic Scott, 2006, p.1)

We each come to an encounter of the natural world along different paths. The Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative seeks to recognize, honour and create a place for a variety of these paths. Each path, to borrow words from eminent mountain guide, Hans Gmoser, invites us “to inhale and breathe life again.” (C. Scott, 2006) For the

mountain biker, the backcountry skier, and the mountain trekker this path includes an abiding sense of the wonder and play inherent in all life.

It is the belief of SH2H advocates – and supported by research – that mixed non-motorized recreational activities (mountain biking, hiking, equestrian travel, skiing, snowshoeing) can co-exist. Within the proposed routes of the Shuswap trail system are areas for shared and dedicated natural play. The goal always: inspire people to leave their vehicles, move their bodies, encounter the natural world in which we live and depend on – “to inhale and breathe life again.”

Where the lure of freedom and wind coax the downhill free rider, specialized trails have been proposed. Where natural tread requires care from damage specialized walking decks and alternate equestrian routes are considered. Where higher alpine ridgelines demand expertise and backcountry knowledge, protected alpine routes are proposed.

A Trail Alliance Held in the Public Commons

“...in every region and every town, indeed in every neighbourhood, there are special places which have come to symbolize the area, and the people’s roots there. These places may be natural beauties or historic landmarks left by ages past. But in some form they are essential.” (C. Alexander, 1977, p. 132)

The envisioned Shuswap Hut and Trail system is intended for everyone, to be developed and managed under an alliance of representative stakeholders, and held in the public commons. With most of the trail on crown land managed under provincial authority, trails and huts within the system become part of the region’s public green way assets, and accessible to all. A representative body co-manages the overall system in cooperation with multiple stakeholder interests under a memorandum of agreement with the Provincial land authorities. The Shuswap First Nation Bands, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and municipal districts are recognized as key directing stakeholders.

To this end, the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance has been formed as a multi-stakeholder non-profit organization positioned to grow the concept of a regional hut and trail network in a way that is authentic to the communities of the Shuswap.

An Education Underfoot

“Education and stewardship are the primary reasons the Hut Association organization exists. Association bylaws state the following education purpose: planning, organizing, and developing educational courses for remote on-site study of wilderness, the natural environment, and the relationship of human culture to the natural world.” (AMWHA, The Mills Creek-Iditarod Trail Hut-to-Hut System Proposal, 2004, p.13)

The educational potential of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative presents a special opportunity for the region. Educational values are particularly high in areas that link two or three communities, are easily accessed within a few hours commute, and present a diversity of ecology and culture (the Larch Hills bog lakes,

Salmon Arm Bay estuaries, Reinecker Creek micro-forest zones, Switzmalph Cultural Centre, Squilax aboriginal routes).

Include in these regions opportunity for overnight visits, healthy physical natural play, environmental service programs – and the experiential learning potential climbs.

In the case of existing hut-to-hut trail case studies, the role of ecological education plays an important role. The Mountain Classroom programs within the Appalachian Mountain Club's trail system, for example, offer day and multi-day leadership, life skills, forestry, watershed, wildlife and geology experiences. (AMC, 2003)

Interviews with the Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association (2005) linked us with an organization promoting an inspiring vision of education and stewardship. The primary service envisioned by this hut-to-hut system of natural trails is to provide an educational venue exploring "the relationship of human culture to the natural world." (AMWHA, 2004, p. 13)

The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society (H. Youmans, 1999) provides a compelling framework around which to build an educational program challenging that as human pressure increases on wildlife populations, "it is crucial that a prevailing utilitarian view of public lands as 'here to be used' in individual recreational pursuits be replaced by attitudes and management that foster use and enjoyment of the environment in a caring manner that is sustainable, particularly with respect to wildlife resources." (p. 1.12) To this end they present four deepening levels at which information and educational programs should focus:

- **Acceptance/tolerance** – replacing misconceptions about wildlife species with facts, including how to avoid conflicts.
- **Awareness** – presenting information on nature viewing opportunities, how to identify wildlife species, and "appropriate nature viewing conduct." (1.12)
- **Education/Appreciation** – exploring life history and habitat relationships, species relationships within specific ecosystems, and our own role/impact within the same ecosystems including the potential affect of "inappropriate recreational conduct." (1.12)
- **Wildlife/Land Ethic** – instills "a sense of compassion for wildlife and a personal obligation with respect to practicing land and wildlife stewardship and encouraging others to do so." (1.12)

The challenge for the SH2H and Shuswap Trail Alliance partners will be a commitment to learn together. Already, the exercise of gathering multi-use stakeholders together has revealed the range of perception regarding sustainable and appropriate levels of activity within the landscape. A determination to discuss, listen and above all, seek sound research and guidance together will be important.

The first 12 months of the formally established Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance would suggest the resolve needed to forge a cooperative approach to learning and planning is feasible. If anything, the acts of intentionally gathering to listen, speak, and learn from each other is a powerful statement of educational purpose.

Equestrian riders seek to understand and educate other trail users to the needs of horse riders (Back Country Horsemen Guidebook, Section 14. Trail Courtesy, n.d.) and share guidelines for building sustainable trails.

Mountain bike advocates take responsibility for concerns that tire tread may impact the trail more than hikers and gather existing research noting “the impacts of bicycling on wildlife are generally similar to the effects of hiking.” (P. Webber et al., 2004, p. 253) Together, cyclists, equestrian enthusiasts, and hikers monitor current scientific reporting to better understand the sensitivity of bears to human disturbance. (G. Joslin and H. Youmans, 1999, p. 7.26) As well, a balanced consideration of acceptable impact within the working forest environment of the Shuswap will be needed.

Perhaps, Aldo Leopold’s historic “land ethic” provides an appropriate baseline for assessing our planning, education and actions together when he writes: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” (A. Leopold, 1949, as cited by H. Youmans, 1999)

Inspired by these visions of educational purpose, the SH2H proposes putting the infrastructure in place to attract innovative educational experiences.

Supporting Local Economic Diversity

Embedded within the concept of a regional trail alliance co-managing the hut and trail system with regional partners is a commitment to support and grow local economic opportunities. In turn, the trail system gains the benefit of professional expertise, in-kind maintenance agreements, and additional operating revenues. Economic development within the community-focused model of the SH2H would be measured in stable local employment and the retention of regionally based business operations. But nature based business does not just appear, nor is it feasible for small operators to independently create the trail network to succeed. The infrastructure must be in place and promoted, new business alliances must be conceived and built, innovative experiences must be marketed for viable success.

Within the overall SH2H initiative is an opportunity to assist and grow new hospitality businesses, guides, related service providers, and accommodation reservations. Successful development of a sustainable hut and trail system appears to be compatible with a linked program for business development and start-up within the nature-based, eco-tourism and recreation market place. Of particular significance are increased opportunities for aboriginal tourism within the Shuswap. (A. Artz, interview, Nov. 3, 2004; Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia, 2005)

Program partners who have assisted in the assessment and development of economic opportunity include Community Futures Development Corporation, Salmon Arm Economic Development Society, the CSRD Economic Development Office, the Chambers of Commerce, Okanagan College and Thompson Rivers University’s Tourism Management and Adventure Guide Programs.

As well, expanded Provincial, National and International reach appears achievable with the assistance of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) like Adventure Okanagan Cooperative, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Tourism BC, and others.

A further review of the economic potential related to a regional hut and trail network suggests that with clear commitment from stakeholders the return warrants investment.

Public/Private Partnerships

There has been considerable discussion regarding the public/private partnership approach the SH2H initiative has been exploring. The bottom line is one of creating a regional trail resource that is held in the public commons, accessible by all (appropriate to skill level, preparedness and ability required for each designated route) – while at the same time supporting local economic and environmental development opportunities like educational programs, environmental research, wilderness guides, accommodation operators, transportation providers and other related businesses.

Why the need to consider an integrated partnership approach? Because the viability of developing, maintaining and managing the proposed hut and trail system – and ensuring environmental stewardship values are maintained as a top priority – will require an investment of resources and expertise. It is a question of capacity. The combined knowledge, skill and commitment of First Nations, government, non-profit recreational groups, environmental and industry leaders, and commercial operators working together have the capacity to create a natural resource for the long-term benefit of everyone.

By encouraging opportunities for private investment and business operations within the framework of the hut-to-hut trail system, a new source of financial, human and material resources becomes available for long-term sustainability.

Consultation response would suggest mixed support for a private/public partnership approach. In the public interest survey (SHTA, 2006) 66% of the respondents were in support of privately guided use of the trails, waterway and huts. A further 19% indicated it would depend, citing comments like, “if they don’t have priority,” and “don’t act like they own the trails.”

Response during interviews from local outdoor enthusiasts, particularly within the mountaineering community, would suggest more caution regarding private use of public trails and huts. Outdoor enthusiasts cite areas where they once experienced solitude within the wilderness now being busy and overrun with other people. This would support the suggestion that user conflict between public and privately led groups is going to be higher amongst highly involved enthusiast segments of an activity. (H. K. Cordell, C. Betz, G. Green, S. Mou, V. Leeworthy, P. Wiley, J. Barry, & D. Hellerstein, 2004) Note: no clear example of conflict was ever given within the Shuswap, suggesting this may be a fear of perception and needs further exploration.

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District directors have opted for a tax based revenue strategy to support the current parks plans. Concern has been expressed regarding private operator use of public regional trails. (T. Baccigalupo, interview, March 14, 2005) The CSRD is focusing on creating public recreation resources with people tax dollars. The concern is that any perception that the CSRD is working with commercial interests will erode confidence in the current parks plan. There is also a concern private users will start to demand exclusivity over natural recreational trails.

Interestingly, the Area C Parks Plan (R. Beardmore, D. Kaegi, and R. Rollins, 2003) did conduct a survey asking opinions on revenue generation. The least favoured option was the introduction of a special tax followed by pay parking at parks. User fees received 50% somewhat or stronger support. Allowing commercial operators –

restaurant of convenience food concessions – received just over 50% support. Involvement of commercial sponsorship (64%) and establishment of a Trust Fund (65+%) were the most favoured revenue options. (p. 51)

It should be noted: the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative is a non-profit community driven initiative. Public use is a priority. As well, public alienation from crown land is not possible within commercial recreational tenure agreements. (F. Thiessen, meeting, March 23, 2006) And potentially, where an organization like the Shuswap Trail Alliance held a management agreement in cooperation with the Province, any privately led guide operators would have to access permission through the organization before being issued tenure.

Within the overall assessment of viability, however, the SH2H has analysed costs for recreational infrastructure development, ongoing maintenance, environmental monitoring, and adaptation. To be viable, a leveraged approach to revenue generation is required. Partnership with appropriate eco and outdoor activity guides and operators, as well as with existing accommodation operators, would provide an important investment layer supporting the long term success of both the trail and hut system, as well as the environmental education, study and protection goals of the SH2H initiative. In addition, private tenure agreements can include maintenance and conservation arrangements contributing to the overall goals and objectives of the Shuswap Hut and Trail concept.

Private operators also bring a high level of skill and expertise in safety and risk management, in ecologically sound travel and backcountry living practices, in habitat impact mitigation and environmental education (C. Welsh and R. Reid, 1997), and in “market response and responsiveness.” (B. Lane, 1999)

Provincial guidelines (Ministry of Environment, Government of British Columbia, 2006) for commercial nature-based recreational tourism require operators to develop a complete environmental management plan. In many cases, cutting edge innovation and green practices are being pioneered and practised by backcountry operators.

More backcountry tourism operators are taking on environmental monitoring and research at their own cost. “You’re not going to have any guests if you screw up the environment,” observes C. Murray (February, 2005), co-founder of the province’s first private sector environmental stewardship program. The incentive to maintain intact wilderness habitat is built in as a core asset of a backcountry business.

An examination of current best practices in environmental management of guided outdoor recreation reveal complex planning standards within the industry. Objectives including minimised visitor impacts on the environment and education of visitors lead to concrete action plans. Controls, actions and quantifiable measures are put in place to accurately monitor changes both visibly within the landscape and contextually from land management feedback. (C. Welsh and R. Ried, 1997)

After a review of costs, options, and best practices, it is the opinion of the author that development of a public/private partnership approach continues to make sense both economically and environmentally. Expertise, skill, and investment capital in both recreational infrastructure and habitat management will be leveraged.

In addition, local case examples of negative public/private user conflicts were not forthcoming. This may be a gap requiring further research. However, of the 24-month consultation period, public users expressed only general concern over perceived problems with private operators. Specific local examples were not cited.

Of the many private operators consulted, only one backcountry operator responded with concern that developed trail access and huts may have a negative affect on the wilderness habitat and subsequently their ability to appropriately manage visitor use of an area. Concern was not, however, over public access, just the ability to maintain pristine wilderness. The operator commented that they appreciate hearing from locals headed up into the same area, that way they can plan to avoid that area and impacting the public users. (B. Shaft, Nov. 19, 2005)

This type of cooperative attitude, but clear concern for the integrity of the environment, was consistent with everyone we spoke with operating within the Shuswap watershed region.

An Epic Story with International Appeal: The 5 Rings Trail

The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance is positioned to take a lead role in advocating for a wider alliance throughout the southern interior mountain trench. Through the Adventure Okanagan Cooperative/Bearfoot Canada's (D. Elzer, 2004) proposed 5 Rings Trail strategy, the SH2H initiative looks to partner with other regions along the Okanagan Valley.

The 5 Rings Trail proposes five ecological "bioregions" linked by trails with hut-to-hut capacity. Under a unifying identity increased environmental, social and economic sustainability is leveraged. As part of this strategy, the creation of a Southern Interior Trails Council Alliance has been proposed. (D. Elzer, 2005)

A meeting of regional trail leadership will be needed. To this end, new contacts beyond the Shuswap boundaries were initiated, with fall/winter 2006 targeted to deepen these connections. (M. Shewchuk, interview, June 13, 2005; C. Henderson, interview, August 24, 2006; J. P. Squire, interview, August 28, 2006; C. Faulk, interview, September 20, 2006)

Centralized Booking, Access, Custodians and Locks

The huts are intended to function both as an ecological management tool of human interaction within the landscape and as a point of economic generation into the Hut and Trail system. To this end, use of a centralized booking system for all huts within the network becomes an important tool. The Adventure Okanagan Cooperative's Live Calendar Internet registration system has been designed with an integrated hut booking capacity in mind. Also, the Sicamous and District Chamber of Commerce recently developed a regional centralized booking web portal for the Shuswap. Use of the 5 Rings Trail Live Calendar linked into the Shuswap portal is seen as a ready-to-use set of tools ideally suited for the Hut-to-Hut booking needs.

Registration would be received on a first come first served basis, and where demand was rigorous a lottery system may be appropriate. However, in order to maximize hut use and leverage the full capacity of these facilities to support ongoing maintenance of the system, an agreed upon formulae to manage guided groups will be needed.

A first draft of this system might look like: 40% of all hut space is reserved for general public bookings, and 60% of hut space is reserved for guided group bookings up until three months prior at which point the space is released again to the general booking pool. This, however, would need to be adjusted depending on demand.

Where general public use warrants increased available bed space, the percentages could be adjusted. The objective: to maintain a 65% or better booking rate throughout the season of use.

Managing access to the huts is important. A system similar to the Alpine Club of Canada's hut system is envisioned where advanced booking results in access via a changeable padlock code. Seasonal custodial presence is also envisioned where a volunteer or paid hut host manages access.

A New Old Idea Who's Time Has Come?

Throughout the process of this consultation it was noted how often the phrase "we've been talking about something like this for years" was spoken. This would often be followed by comments like: "It's about time."

Through the course of the preliminary consultation, it was clear the idea to create a network of natural trails that would have ecological, social and economic benefit to the community was not a new idea. It had been brewing.

The idea of longer trails linking communities shows up in regional studies. The Sicamous and District Recreation Development Study (T. Adam, 1997) notes the idea of a trail between Sicamous and Salmon Arm had surfaced frequently in local discussion. And the dream of creating a hut-to-hut style wilderness experience in the Shuswap found its way into the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm et al, 2002) as a result of similar conversations over the past twenty years. (T. Brighthouse, interview, n.d.)

As a result of these twenty plus years of "what if" story telling, the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative quickly gathered momentum. The specifics of these earlier discussions varied throughout the region, but all were leading to a common outcome: the creation of natural trail ways. Some examples:

- reclaim aboriginal routes as a means to leveraging traditional interests, teaching ecological and cultural values, and building economic opportunity (A. Artz, Little Shuswap Indian Band, interviews, Nov. 3, 2004, Oct. 17, 2005), (Switzmalph Cultural Centre, meeting, Jan. 18, 2005),
- use trails to help preserve an environmentally unique area and deepen ecological awareness (T. Brighthouse, Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society, interview, June 27, 2006), (North Shuswap Naturalists, meeting, February 16, 2006),
- create healthier communities and new opportunities for physical recreation in the Shuswap's natural surroundings (Shuswap Outdoors, Larch Hills Nordic Society, Salmon Arm Greenways, Shuswap Chapter Backcountry Horsemen of BC)(Barz, Crowley, Crowley, and Wharton, 1976)
- diversify our economic interdependence on the land through new opportunities that are ecologically less demanding (Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy, 2002), (Sicamous and District Recreation Development Study, 1997) (Tim Adam, interview, April 26, 2005).

Multiple goals; similar strategy: to create lasting natural pathways for non-motorised travel throughout the Shuswap. The opportunity is before us to tell a story through these trails that embraces a breadth of vision worthy of our attention and compelling to our visitors. In the end, the experience of stepping out upon a way that is rich with the history and dreams of the people who are fashioning it will be as compelling a draw to its travellers as the natural features within which it weaves.

Section Three: Research and Consultation

Leveraging Resources: An Invitation to Work Together

To leverage the full potential of a linked network of trails a fresh resolve to cooperate inter-regionally is needed. The geographic boundaries of the Shuswap Hut and Trial proposal cross three regional districts, four municipal boundaries, two provincial forest districts, four Indian Band jurisdictions, and no less than four major forest industry licensees. Any effort to connect the Shuswap – to “weave it green” with natural pathways – will demand a multi-partnership approach.

A survey of existing organizations and governing bodies with non-motorized trail interests in the Shuswap watershed region reveals a surprising inventory of committed resources, time, passion and people:

- the 900 member strong Larch Hills Nordic Ski Society,
- the growing greenway trails of Salmon Arm and Sicamous,
- the recent expansion of trails by the Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of BC,
- the quiet yet tireless work building wilderness trails by Shuswap Outdoors,
- the seven year efforts of the South Shuswap Recreational Trails Society creating a roadside walkway in Blind Bay,
- the Little Shuswap Indian Band’s interest in re-establishing their traditional trail interest through the North Shuswap, and recent expansion of mountain biking trails around Quaaout Lodge,
- the proposal by the Adams Lake Indian Band and Neskonlith Indian Band to extend a footpath connecting the West Bay between Salmon Arm and Sandy Point,
- the Sicamous Chamber of Commerce’s efforts expanding trails in their area,
- the traditional riverside trails re-established by the Switzmalph Cultural Centre,
- the Shuswap Mountain Bike communities work building ever new single track rides around Salmon Arm,
- the growing momentum of the Shuswap Association for Rowing and Paddling and interest in regional paddling trips
- the regional districts major parks planning process that identifies linear parks (i.e. trails) as a key feature throughout each of the electoral areas of the Shuswap,
- incorporation of greenway trail corridors in local private land development plans, including an expression of commitment to include signed linkages into a regional trail system, (Bayview, Waterways, Twin Anchors, Hyde Mountain, Regal Resorts)
- the announcement by a cluster of advocates in Enderby to create the Gordon Dale Memorial trail connecting the Enderby Cliffs with Three Valley Gap,

- Chase District and Chamber of Commerce's Centennial Trail proposal
- Kingfisher Interpretive Centre's educational trail and management of the Mara Mountain Fire Lookout
- the establishment of Riverside campgrounds for paddlers along the Kingfisher to Ashton Creek section of the Shuswap River
- the proposal for an interregional trail corridor connecting the five ecological regions between Osoyoos and the Shuswap along the Okanagan trench (the 5 Rings Trail)

By linking these 17 distinct efforts, a coordinated network of well designed, signed and maintained trail routes throughout the Shuswap watershed has serious potential. And with the formation of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance in January 2006, many of these stakeholder groups have taken a first step toward leveraging this new story of cooperation.

Project Partners: Agency and Community support to date

Community consultation has tested and shaped the current draft of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway concept. Support for this draft vision has been consistent and encouraging. Agency discussions in the first six months of the consultation included the Economic Development office of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (Adelheid Bender, Robyn Cyr), Community Futures (Dave Andrews), Salmon Arm Economic Development Corporation (Caroline Grover), Sicamous and District Chamber of Commerce (Doreen Flavel), Little Shuswap Indian Band (Andreas Artz), and the Adventure Okanagan Cooperative (Don Elzer). It was anticipated these primary community agencies would play a key role in driving this initiative forward.

As of August 2006 the list of participating stakeholders has grown to include the CSRD Shuswap Directors, the CSRD Parks Planning Office (Roger Beardmore, Olive Dodd, John Evdovimoff), The City of Salmon Arm Greenways Committee (Gary Kalloch, Ian Clay), The District of Sicamous, The Switmalph Cultural Society (Sharon Jules, Louis Thomas), The Salmon Arm Hotel Association, The Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce, The South Shuswap Chamber of Commerce, Larch Hills Nordic Society, the Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of BC, The North Shuswap Naturalists, Okanagan College Salmon Arm Campus, Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society, Skookum Cycle and Ski, Bayview Developments, Hyde Mountain Golf Course, Regal Resorts, Twin Anchors, Waterways Houseboat.

Sponsorship support in both financial and in-kind services have been contributed by Community Futures Development Corporation of the Shuswap, Skookum Cycle and Ski, Okanagan College Salmon Arm Campus, The City of Salmon Arm, Sicamous and District Chamber of Commerce, Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Photoscene, Shuswap Excavating, LA Signs, Doug Leatherdale and Associates, Luminous Experiential Event Designs, Salmon Arm Rap Attack, Salmon Arm Folk Music Society/Roots and Blues Festival, the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society, Waterways Houseboats, the Salmon Arm Economic Development Society, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area E Economic Opportunities Fund, Western Economic Diversification Canada, and Service Canada's Job Creation Partnership Program.

Honouring a Story Built On Partnerships

The story of partnership being woven through the SH2H extends to a many-layered web of stakeholders. The organizational structure initiated through the creation of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance is built on a model of partnership. Regardless of formal membership in the Alliance, key stakeholder groups are recognized as having a place within the Advisory Network. They are to be consulted when their interests stand to be affected, and invited to join in partnership efforts of mutual benefit. These stakeholder groups include:

- the Shuswap First Nations
- local municipal and regional government
- private landowners and developers
- tourism and commercial recreation operators
- recreational user groups
- environmental organizations
- fish and game Interests
- forest industry
- other industry and business stakeholders: retail, services, agriculture, range, trapping, mineral extraction
- tourism alliances and DMOs: AOC/Bearfoot Canada, BC Tourism, COTA, TOTA, CTC, etc.
- regional economic development organizations
- educational institutions
- service organizations
- arts and cultural organizations
- Provincial and Federal government agencies
- Provincial and National Organizations: e.g. BC Outdoor Recreation Council, BC Wildlife Federation, Off Road Vehicle Coalition, Trans Canada Trail/Trails BC, Canada Trails, Leave No Trace

Throughout the course of the Phase 1 consultation representatives in each of these stakeholder sectors have been contacted and interviewed. Their direction, guidance, critique and support have shaped the SH2H concept. The organizational structure of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance is based on an understanding of continuing this partnership approach to the initiative. The above list serves as an important checklist for each local trail project undertaken.

Related Recreation Trail and Land Management Plans

Several planning documents are of particular importance in determining location, potential use, impacts, challenges and objectives for any outdoor recreational trail system in the Shuswap. The following summary should act as a checklist and resource guide for further planning.

Okanagan Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan

The Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP is an approved strategic land use plan within the Province of British Columbia. The plan area is characterised by rapid population growth, a diversifying economy and unique environmental settings - resulting in a range of interests and potential expectations. In conjunction with other legislation, the plan sets an integrated overall strategic direction for the management of crown lands within the Okanagan/Shuswap (Okanagan TSA).

(Integrated Land Management Bureau, Province of British Columbia)

The Okanagan Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan (OSLRMP) was approved in January 2001. (OSLRMP, 2001) It is a strategic document outlining land resource management objectives for 93% of the Crown land within the Okanagan-Shuswap plan area. The OSLRMP should be considered a core resource document in planning trail routes or hut sites within the defined Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative.

The OSLRMP includes general management zoning (GMZ) in 20 core land based resource values including Recreation, Riparian and Wetlands, Tourism, and Wildlife. The plan also identifies ten polygon specific resource management zones (RMZ). Of the RMZ's, those related to recreation, Tourism Areas, and Wildlife are the most directly applicable to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative. However, each of the zones reflects overlapping values within the landscape and should be cross-referenced.

The OSLRMP observes "commercial timber harvesting and related access development are allowed in the vast majority of the planning area." (OSLRMP, 2001, ESi) A total of 7.9% of the land base is protected. Riparian areas are given additional protection through 10,000 hectares of 'budgeted' reserves from timber harvest lands. And Caribou are named as a special 'species of concern' in the plan area. (p. ESi & ii) Objectives for protected areas are not included within the jurisdiction of the LRMP but are managed under the provincial Ministry of Environment.

A regional monitoring committee of representative stakeholders oversees implementation of the Okanagan-Shuswap LRMP. The Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative has been presented to this body for direction and feedback, along with regular updates to the monitoring committee's bi-annual meetings and liaison with the OSLRMP Monitoring Committee's coordinator, Terry MacDonald.

Little Shuswap Indian Band Archaeological Study of Significant Trails

A major study was commissioned by the Little Shuswap Indian Band (Running Horse Consulting, 2001) to determine the location of trails that "hold values of significance and culture." (p. 6) Utilizing archival, oral and field based Archaeological methods three primary areas were explored. These included the Scotch Creek Watershed, the Anstey River from Hunakwa Lake to its headwaters, and the Ratchford-Pettipiece trail area.

The study was able to successfully determine the location and history of the Scotch Creek and Ratchford-Pettipiece trails, and recommends that sections of both trails be "clearly identified and protected for future

generations.” (RHC, 2001, p. 7) As well, it documents the location of thirty other trails deemed significant within the Little Shuswap Indian Band’s area of interest stating “there is no doubt of the rich ethnographic, and historical value of these trails to both First Nations and non-natives.” (p.7)

It is understood other bands within the region have conducted similar studies. These were not made available. The LSIB study is an important document, however, reminding recreational trail planners of the significance regional trails hold for the Shuswap aboriginal community. Trails are important resources of both cultural and ecological significance. To this end, leadership and direction for future trail development must be conducted in partnership with the regional bands of the Shuswap First Nation.

2002 Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy

In May 2002 the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm & Associates, 2002) was published. Commissioned jointly by the Salmon Arm Economic Development Corporation and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, the study was the first comprehensive effort to identify the most promising tourism products and opportunities, based on the land and water resources of the region. Ten product clusters were identified as holding the best short-term promise for outdoor recreation-based tourism opportunities in the Shuswap. Five of these clusters – Nordic Skiing, Light Touring, Ski Touring and Snow shoeing/Mountain Biking and Cycle Touring/Horseback Riding/Lodges and Resorts/ and most specifically, Cabin-to-Cabin Systems – relate directly to this proposal.

Based on regional consultation, interviews and international market research, the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy concluded, “the market potential for lake or trail-based cabin-to-cabin systems is significant, judging from the increasing demand for cabin stays in [other regions such as] Alaska.” (M. Chisholm et al, 2002, p. 122)

The U.S. Forest Service operates a comprehensive wilderness system of 193 rustic trail-accessed cabins in Alaska. Similar cabin-to-cabin systems exist elsewhere in the world, including Scandinavia, the European Alps, Washington, and New Zealand. These and other hut-to-hut trail systems were reviewed as part of the SH2H concept development. A case study report on three of these systems is available as an attachment. (J. Ayotte, 2005)

The Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm et al, 2002) assessed the market demand for Cabin-to-Cabin trail systems to be high in the province, neighbouring US states, the wider US market, and internationally. An analysis of competing cabin-to-cabin trail systems suggested low to medium competition provincially, with a few US locations established as high competitors. Overall potential was rated as high for all five regions of the Shuswap. (p. 123)

The 5 Rings Trail Identity Strategy

More recently, through the combined efforts of regional adventure tourism operators in the Okanagan and Shuswap, a major hut-to-hut trail strategy titled “The Five Rings Trail” (D. Elzer, 2004) was launched aimed at establishing a world-class wilderness travel destination in advance of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

The Five Rings Trail is a proposed Hut-to-Hut Trail Network that would link backcountry areas from Osoyoos and the Boundary/Similkameen with the Okanagan and then the Monashee and Shuswap, ending in Revelstoke. As

an industry led initiative, it is directly linked to benefit local rural communities through nature-based tour operators, small backcountry lodges and rural accommodators. A cooperative tenure application for the 5 Rings Trail System was submitted to the Province of British Columbia, with details still under negotiation.

The 5 Rings Trail System is intended to be constructed in partnership with rural communities and outdoor organizations as well as key stakeholders that presently perform business operations in the backcountry. (D. Elzer, 2004) The trail system holds the potential to unite the interior regions as one single product unit within what AOC/Bearfoot Canada (D. Elzer, 2004) has called a bioserve philosophy of smart travel— one that would hold significant international appeal.

For the Shuswap region, the opportunity is before us to define how this relationship should look. This report attempts to frame the Shuswap Hut and Trail concept in a fashion that would integrate and benefit from a wider Okanagan/Shuswap partnership with the 5 Rings Trail and other trail systems in the Southern Interior.

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District Parks Planning and OCP

The CSRD has now produced and accepted Parks Plans for Area C (South Shuswap) and Area F (North Shuswap). A draft plan for Area E is currently under review for final adoption by the regional board of directors. Within these plans are a series of proposed “linear corridors” or “trail parks” to be developed and managed under the regional district Parks Planning office. These linear trail parks form an important series of anchor points within the wider proposal of the Shuswap Hut and Trail system. Each of the Area parks plans is monitored and directed under an appointed Area Parks Commission. These commissions, while not solely focused on trails, are an important first point of stakeholder direction for further trail development in each of the CSRD regions.

The CSRD is also completing a regional Official Community Plan for the Shuswap. This plan sets core-planning objectives for the region and guides both administration and directors in future development.

Other Regional District Plans

The scope of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative crosses more than one regional district boundary. While the Columbia Shuswap Regional District is the central governing body within the proposed system, proposed route sections cross both the North Okanagan Regional District and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District boundaries. (Chase, Enderby, Mabel Lake)

Only a brief review of these plans was conducted as part of this study, but would suggest compatibility with the proposed SH2H concept. Example: The Thompson-Nicola Region Tourism Opportunities Strategy (Meadfield Consulting, 2002) identifies Outdoor Adventure as one of the TNRD’s key strengths, recognizing Summer and Winter Adventure and Ecotourism as principal product areas.

For further route planning in these regions existing documentation must be considered. This includes Tourism Opportunity Strategies, Official Community Plans, and Parks and Recreational Plans. Further research and consultation is needed within the NORD and TNRD.

Enderby and Area F (North Okanagan Regional District) Outdoor Recreation Study

The Enderby and Area F Outdoor Recreation Study (T. Adam, n.d.) was conducted in the 1990s to assess potential for outdoor recreation development in the North Okanagan. A review of user activities is conducted as

well as an overview of key geographic features in the area. These include Enderby Cliffs, Hunters Range, Larch Hills, Mabel Lake and the Shuswap River. Finds of that study concluded that the geography of the Enderby and Area F region support “an incredible variety of outdoor recreation activities . . .and that there is significant potential for growth and development in many of these activities without creating too many detrimental side effects.” (T. Adam, n.d., p. 32)

Priority projects identified in the study included development of the Shuswap River as a “unique wilderness and heritage destination with an emphasis on eco-friendly recreation uses.” (T. Adam, n.d., p. 34) It also recommended enhanced public access to the Enderby Cliffs and development of Hunters Range as a 4-season destination balancing motorized and non-motorized use. (p. 35) Work targeted at these recommendations has been undertaken including the establishment of public access sites along the upper Shuswap River between Kingfisher and Ashton Creek and the establishment of the Enderby Cliffs as a Class A Provincial Park.

The work of the Gordon Dale Memorial Trail Society, championed by a group of advocates from Enderby and the NORD Area F, is being created to link the Enderby Cliffs with Wap Lake and Three Valley Gap. The Outdoor Recreation Study supports this concept stating “if this trail does become a reality, it should become very attractive to those visitors that want extended hikes.” (T. Adam, n.d., p. 10)

Similar recommendations support the promotion of complementary recreational activities such as bird watching with walking and hiking, the need for a cooperative approach to developing outdoor recreational infrastructure, and the need for an integrated outdoor recreation marketing strategy for the region. Canoeing is given particularly high recommendations noting that “given the relatively benign nature of this activity and the lack of controversy surrounding it, canoeing should be strongly promoted.” (T. Adam, n.d., p. 23)

Recreation Access Management Plan for the Salmon Arm Forest District

A complete review and assessment of recreational use and access within the Salmon Arm Forest Service boundary has been conducted (J. Delay, 1999). This document identifies all the roads and trails within the Salmon Arm Forest District regularly accessed for recreational purposes. Each road, trail or site is given a brief summary of use, assessed according to number of current user days, and given a projected potential growth in user day numbers based on its current status. Recommendations are also given for each road, trail or site.

Interestingly, recommendations include reviewing and updating the plan “every 3-5 years to capture new or expanded recreational use on the forestland base.” (J. Delay, 1999, 5.2) It would appear this has not happened. In fact, many of the recommendations would appear to have not been considered within the preceding years of the report being completed. Regardless, the study is an excellent source for identifying current user groups with recreational interest in a particular area of the region, and for considering appropriate use objectives for trails in the region.

Sicamous and District Recreation Development Study

This study (T. Adam, 1997) provides an important overview of potential for extending the traditional tourism season in Sicamous and surrounding district through outdoor recreational development. Future potential was considered in core activity areas outside of the already high summer use of houseboating, camping, boating and fishing.

Development of the snowmobiling potential in the district was given high priority and has resulted in significant improvements for the community. Recommendations related to other supporting outdoor recreation activities are pending. Of these, the report offers the following recommendations relevant to the proposed Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative:

- *one promising idea . . . is to open up a trail or trail network that could be used by back country skiers in the winter and mountain bikers in the summer. This would involve a trail and possibly a cabin so that both summer and winter users could have either an overnight place to stay or at least a place to prepare meals or warm up. A potential location could be the Sicamous side of Larch Hills because there would be no conflict with snowmobilers and there are spectacular views at higher elevations. Opening up Larch Hills with a connecting trail to the network already established on the Salmon Arm side might draw visitors into Sicamous. (T. Adam, 1997, p. 3)*
- *. . . ongoing development of trails, especially if they are multi use trails, adds to the overall desirability of the area as a tourist destination. The dream of a trail between Sicamous and Salmon Arm and possibly even around the lake does warrant serious investigation but cannot be an initiative of just the Sicamous area. (T. Adam, 1997, p. 6)*
- *Visitors from Europe are often keen cyclists and are very attracted to wilderness trails. Increasingly, visitors to Sicamous inquire about cycling opportunities. A local sporting goods store (now closed) frequently provided direction to cyclists, many from Europe, looking for back country riding areas. (T. Adam, 1997, p. 6)*

Interestingly, the study suggests mountain biking holds “great potential” (T. Adam, 1997, p. 7) for the district, but notes that in order to realize this potential will require a “strong nucleus of local enthusiasts and entrepreneurs to aggressively develop and promote the sport locally.” (p. 7) The recent work by the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance to create the Larch Hills Traverse Trail linking Salmon Arm with Sicamous has identified mountain bike enthusiasts as a key target user group. This may well help to address this need by extending the significant influence of mountain bike “enthusiasts” based in Salmon Arm.

The study also identifies infrastructure and services gaps that need to be filled in order to enhance the regions profile as a “first class destination point for off season visitors.” (T. Adam, 1997, p. 13) These include:

- better signage for recreation trails and areas
- well designed brochures, maps, and information
- security for parked vehicles
- intentional welcome strategies by local businesses
- the need for off season and winter events to profile activities and attract visitors
- a need for increased secondary activities, especially for winter visitors. This includes “bad weather” alternatives, evening leisure opportunities, and kid friendly activities. For Sicamous and District the study identifies desirable activities to include indoor swimming, tobogganing areas, and movie theatre; but also

notes the community is not large enough to offer many of these amenities year round. Reference to leveraging the nearby resources of Salmon Arm is mentioned, which raises again, the potential strength of wider regional partnerships in promoting and attracting visitors to the area.

(T. Adam, 1997, p. 13, 14)

The study concludes by reinforcing the value in partnership efforts to implement and maximize the impact of strategic infrastructure and marketing initiatives.

Municipal Greenway Plans

Both the municipalities of Salmon Arm and Sicamous have developed Greenway corridor plans. Both communities have recognized the value and need for recreational natural pathways throughout a community, but are also caught by the realities of prior development and planning having not considered this in the original growth of the community. Both Salmon Arm and Sicamous are now implementing programs to acquire and establish community trailways by consulting with local residents, reclaiming existing right of ways, and negotiating new access when property is sold for new development.

Both communities integrate the values of natural environment and healthy recreational activity within the core vision of their Official Community Plan (OCP). The City of Salmon Arm's OCP states "Salmon Arm will recognize and value the unique natural environment, with sustainable, planned development and planning which balances the need for protection, use and enjoyment of natural areas." (City of Salmon Arm, 2002, p. 3)

The District of Sicamous' Official Community Plan outlines strategies for linking the community by "safe, pleasant and convenient multi-purpose trails, paths or routes." (Bylaw No. 410, 2000, Section 8.2) And the City of Salmon Arm's OCP states "the District continues to implement growth strategies that discourage costly urban sprawl and encourage healthy communities, including . . .the development of sidewalks, bikeways and trails." (City of Salmon Arm, 2002, p. 14)

Both the District of Sicamous and the City of Salmon Arm have formally endorsed the efforts of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance, and have expressed their desire to ensure integrated planning of trails linking with Municipal Greenway trail plans. (K. Williams, correspondence, April 5, 2005; C. Bannister, correspondence, March 1, 2006)

Regional Economic Development Plans

Leadership from the region's economic development agencies have remained engaged with the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative and the ongoing work of the Trail Alliance, all with positive encouragement and support. (See "Project Partners".) A review of these organization's Economic Action Plans suggests the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut trail initiative would be a strong complement within their mandate. According to the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm & Associates, 2002) "a locally-owned and operated cabin-to-cabin product would likely fit well within the local economic development plan of the communities in the area." (p. 123)

The Provincial Government increased its funding support for tourism development in an effort to increase year-round industry capacity – an issue of significance to the Shuswap's traditionally summer based tourism industry. The potential international appeal of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail system project, together with the goal of

creating and retaining year-round economic opportunity rooted in the ecological health of our region, would suggest the initiative be given a high priority for implementation.

Market Trends

A Consideration of Intended User Groups

The draft vision for the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut trails circuit identifies a desire to create self-propelled, four-season, nature-based recreation and learning opportunities for the novice, intermediate and experienced wilderness traveller – where “self-propelled” includes (though is not necessarily limited to) hiking, mountain biking, canoe and kayaking, skiing, snow-shoeing and equestrian travel. The inclusion

This identifies the “user groups” in the broadest sense, primarily by desired activity. It is recognized a more comprehensive approach to tourism and recreational development has to consider the deeper cultural, social, ecological and personal qualities of a travel experience to fully understand the motivations and benefits to potential user groups. The following research provides direction for the Shuswap Trail Alliance in understanding current interest, potential and priorities.

Local Recreational Use

Community feedback through the CSRD regional parks planning process demonstrated widespread support for increased opportunities for outdoor recreation. (R. Beardmore, D. Kaegi, and R. Rollins, 2003) The CSRD Area C study includes non-motorized trail development finding that “during the public consultations, the vast majority of interest was expressed in non-motorized trails.” (p. 23)

Results from the Public Interest Survey (SHTA, 2006) conducted during the consultation suggest the highest participation by activity is in walking and hiking, with cross country skiing second, and mountain biking third. (p. 5) When asked if they supported the concept of creating a network of extended non-motorized recreational trails throughout the Shuswap, respondents were overwhelmingly supportive at 97%, and equally high support for the concept of an extended paddle route at 93%.

Qualitative feedback through consultation meetings, information displays and individual feedback also suggests wide spread general local support for the development of non-motorized recreational trails. Comments received indicated a desire for more public access to natural green space, including the opportunity to walk for extended periods along linear greenway corridors. Interest in a variety of skill levels was expressed, with a clear nudge toward ensuring family friendly trail routes are established.

Lake base routes generally received the highest enthusiasm; though generally present the most problematic hurdles as far as stakeholder approvals, proximity to private land, and railway interface. Values respecting the environment, opportunity for young people and new people to the community to discover the natural beauty of the Shuswap, and a clear desire for trail ways to be maintained in the public commons for all to access were expressed.

Some caution was expressed with regard to private operators utilizing public trail ways, however, specific examples of why this was a concern were not shared. At the same time, people generally affirmed the value natural greenways and trails hold for the communities.

Locally, recreational studies (T. Adam, 1997) supported qualitative observations that popular outdoor non-motorized trail based activities in the Shuswap include walking, hiking, mountain biking, trail running, horse back riding, snowshoeing, and Nordic skiing. Some suggestions point to growth niches in the area of mountain biking and trail running within the region. The Sicamous Recreation Development Study (T. Adam, 1997) observed increased participation in mountain biking noting that more and more visitors to the region will bring a mountain bike with them. Snowshoeing also appears to be becoming more popular. The establishment of new snowshoe routes within the Larch Hills Nordic system should help to satisfy this potential growth sport.

According to a regional study of recreational access within the Salmon Arm Forest District (J. Delay, 1999) increasing access by backcountry ski and snow board enthusiasts into the east slopes of North Queest was projected to rise from 250-300 user days/year to 1000 user days per year. Current qualitative observations would suggest this was an accurate prediction for this area commonly known as the Upper Gorge Creek. Increased summer use in the Larch Hills was also projected if the Interpretive Forest was developed. This did not happen. Increased mixed use of the area does appear to have increased, however.

Trends in Outdoor Recreation Activities

According to the Outdoor Recreational Council (Leisure Trends Group, 2005), despite statistics showing more Americans are spending time on line and getting less exercise, overall participation in outdoor human powered activities has continued to grow 6% from 1998 to 2004.

The study finds participant levels – described as anyone participating at least once in an outdoor activity – grew to 141 million people in 2004; and enthusiast levels – described as the core, committed, most frequent self-propelled outdoor activity participants – grew to 43.1 million, a jump of 20% from 1994. (LTG, 2005) Of this continued trend in the U.S., Younger Americans (16 to 24) and women are two of the fastest growing participant groups. (LTG, 2005) Of 16 to 24 year olds, there was a 150% increase in Telemark skiing over 1998 numbers, a 65% increase in hiking and a 92.5% increase in single track mountain biking by enthusiasts. (p. 20) Of female enthusiasts, there was a 112.5% jump in single track bicycling and a 100% jump in snowshoeing. (p. 21)

In the more casual “participant” category, four core activities gained significantly in 2004 over 1998 (LTG, 2005): canoeing (+16.3%), kayaking (+130%), snowshoeing (+50%), telemark skiing (+166.7%), and trail running (+20.3%). (LTG, 2005) In the frequent and committed core market, “enthusiasts” increased their levels of participation in single track bicycling (mountain biking), hiking, snowshoeing, telemark skiing and trail running. (p. 16)

These figures are corroborated by the U.S. National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (K. Cordell, C. Betz, G. Green, S. Mou, V. Leeworthy, P. Wiley, J. Barry, & D. Hellerstein, 2004) which found the highest participation days in physically active, land-based outdoor activities were in day hiking and visiting a wilderness or primitive area. Close seconds included mountain biking and primitive camping, with backpacking and horseback riding coming in after these. (p. 271)

Of particular interest to Shuswap retailers and tourism operators is the Outdoor Industry Association's (LTG, 2005) observation that changes in the "participant" market can "tend to affect lower-cost and impulse purchases outside of the core business," (p. 10) while changes to "the enthusiast market tend to impact the more technical and sophisticated merchandise [used]." (LTG, 2005, p. 10)

According to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (K. Cordell et al, 2004) "enthusiasts represent the primary markets. Target marketing to these participants is likely to pay off most in revenue and profits." (p. 270) The National Survey notes that in the U.S. between 70% and 90% of the total participant days in most outdoor activities are accounted for by enthusiasts. Day hiking enthusiasts surveyed averaged between 16 and 365 participation days per year, and mountain bike enthusiasts clocked in at 25 – 365 participation days per year. (p. 271)

This smaller, committed and very involved "enthusiast" participant segment is important to the Shuswap Hut and Trail initiative. Despite clear interest and support for a regional system of trails by residents in the Shuswap, the opinions of the core enthusiast groups should be given particular consideration. They will point to both potential support and conflicts within each of the proposed route sections. This includes enthusiasts in both the core activities associated with non-motorized trail use, and other stakeholder groups such as motorized recreational users and fish and game enthusiasts. Ultimately, a cooperative approach to trail planning with leadership from each of these enthusiast groups will lead to a more successful system of trails.

Based on discussions with local "enthusiasts" over the past 24 months, the Shuswap has active, committed proponents in the following (with examples of related local organizations in brackets):

- hiking and backpacking (Shuswap Outdoors)
- mountain biking (ad hoc group rides, trail builders and local retailers)
- Nordic skiing and snowshoeing (Larch Hills Nordic Society, Shuswap Outdoors, Skamana Cross Country Ski Club)
- backcountry skiing and mountaineering (Shuswap Mountaineering Club, backcountry ski and lodge operators)
- equestrian (Shuswap and North Okanagan Chapters, Backcountry Horsemen Society of British Columbia)
- bird watching, nature watching (SABNES, Shuswap Naturalists, North Shuswap Naturalists)
- fish and game (Salmon Arm Fish and Game Club, B.C. Wildlife Federation)
- snowmobiling (Seymour Arm and Crowfoot Snowmobile Club, Snowblazers, Eagle Valley Snowmobile Club, Shuswap Snowmobile Association)
- ATV and off-road motorbiking (Sicamous ATV Club, Blind Bay ATV Club, local retailers)

In a recent article, Mountain Equipment Coop board chair, Linda Bartlett (2006) comments "the biggest indicator of what's happening is that more and more people are getting outside." She cites the most recent Outdoor Industry Association report, observing that about 60% of both Canadians and Americans participate in "at least

one self-propelled outdoor activity.” The U.S. National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (K. Cordell et al, 2004) found 83% or almost 177 million people did “some walking for pleasure in the last 12 months. (p. 103)

Bartlett (2006) goes on to note that retail numbers show increased popularity in sports like climbing, paddling, cycling, and Nordic skiing, while camping equipment has shown a slight decline in demand. “Sales of backcountry expedition packs have dropped off while sales of daypacks have increased.”

G. Machlis of the University of Idaho (1993) observes that 50 to 60% of all trail use occurs under two hours, and the first 900 feet of a trail are the most heavily used. (as cited by W. Boyd, n.d.) According to Boyd (n.d.) long distance hikers “generate excitement and wonder in the hiking community, [but] are a small minority of trail users.” (p. 1)

L. Bartlett (2006) comments, “the most significant trend in the outdoor industry is the move to shorter trips, mostly day-use, front country, and lightly equipped.” She continues by noting that older people are favouring less strenuous activities like bird watching and day hiking; younger people are chasing activities like climbing, whitewater kayaking, trail running, and mountain biking.

Notably, the Outdoor Industry Association (LTG, 2005) found single-track mountain biking popularity with enthusiasts had risen 183% since 1998, snowshoeing +300%, and telemark skiing +200%. Hiking had risen +21% and trail running 47%. Enthusiast interest in backpacking, canoeing and Nordic skiing was unchanged. (p.19) Overall, however, the 2004 study observed a decline in backpacking (-23%) from 1998 figures. (p. 18)

The implications: ensure opportunity for shorter half and day long outdoor adventures to support investment in a longer distance natural backcountry trail system, and consider opportunities for lighter modes of backcountry travel utilizing overnight facilities en route such as inns, lodges or huts.

Also, the experience of emersion within intact natural spaces continues to be a core attractor. In a study of waterfront trail users surrounding Lake Ontario, (R. Ritter, N. Rendle, R. Coughlin, 2002) survey respondents indicated that the core attributes that attracted them to a trail was appreciating nature and the waterfront 96%, being surrounded by nature 94%, being close to the lake 90%, and being able to see the lake 87%.

The challenge for the Shuswap will be locating and maintaining adequate corridors of intact natural landscape that can attract use. This will also include aesthetic view scapes. The location of key natural features becomes important. Interestingly, the Lake Ontario survey (R. Ritter et al. 2002) hints toward the one truly consistent asset in the Shuswap’s favour – proximity to the lake. “Being close to” and “being able to see” the lake will be an important consideration in the overall design of trail routes.

Hikers, Bikers, and Horse Riders: Profile

A recent study of Trans Canada Trail users in Ontario (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2004) present the following user profiles by activity:

- hikers and walkers – most are day trippers, 38.4% preferred long distance trails, 28% preferred local/municipal trails. Most are generally well educated and hold a post secondary degree, have middle to upper incomes, identified fall as the most popular season for hiking, and preferred hiking with friends and family. (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2004, p. 30)

- cyclists – look for safe bike storage on overnight trips, prefer “spoke and hub” tours based out of a single accommodation site like a B&B, and made up about 48% of all residents in Toronto. (p. 31)
- horseback riders – were tending to prefer designated horse trails to avoid user conflicts, rely less on commercial accommodation for overnight trips preferring tents or campers (seen as a result of limited services for horses – “bed and bale”), kicked in an annual economic boost to the economy of about \$577 million. (p. 31)

Tourism Destination Use

Prior to the 2003 fires, the Myra Canyon trestles drew 50,000 visitors a year, generating about \$5 million for the B.C. Interior economy. It has been estimated that once the trestles reopen in 2007, visits could double to 100,000 people a year.

(“UBCO Studying Trestles,” 2006)

A review of National, provincial and regional travel trends support the creation of regional outdoor, natural, trail-based infrastructure and experiences.

The Outdoor Industry Association (LTG, 2005) figures for participation in an outdoor adventure sports travel experience in 2004 showed that one in four Americans over the age of 16 took “a vacation where the primary purpose was to participate in an adventure or outdoor activity.” (p. 266) Of the variety of activities, hiking/backpacking was the most popular at 17%, or 9.2 million Americans 16 and older. (p. 267)

Travel trends in the North Thompson-Okanagan region show significant participation statistics favouring land based outdoor activities, visits to National and Provincial parks, wildlife viewing, and bird watching. (Tourism BC, 1998) Hiking and backpacking is named as a top activity for non-residents visiting the region at around 15%. Visiting with friends and relatives ranks as the primary travel activity at 81% for residents in the region (Tourism BC, 1998, p.18).

This would suggest that non-resident visitors to the Shuswap region are a primary target market for outdoor trail based experiences, while residents within the Thompson-Okanagan region will be better served by focusing on the trail and huts’ ability to provide opportunity to spend time with family and friends.

Canadian tourism motivation studies show soft outdoor adventure enthusiasts as a substantial market, with 7.1 million Americans and 4.4 million Canadians taking a recent leisure trip to Canada for this purpose (Research Resolutions & Consulting, 2003a, p. 3).

Note: The CTC defines Soft Outdoor Adventure activities to include cycle touring, kayaking or canoeing, hiking/backpacking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, [and snowshoeing]; and Hard Outdoor Adventure activities to include those where enthusiasts seek adventure and excitement – rock climbing, mountain biking, and heli-skiing. (Research Resolutions & Consulting, 2003b)

For the purposes of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative, primary target markets would be those defined by the Canadian Tourism Commission as Soft Outdoor Adventure enthusiasts who enjoy paddling, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing; and Hard Outdoor Adventure mountain bike enthusiasts. As well,

there is opportunity for longer distance overnight hiking adventures, including alpine route finding traverses such as that proposed in the Anstey Highland area. Hiking in these areas, due to their duration and navigational requirements, are probably best considered Hard Outdoor Adventure experiences.

British Columbia is particularly well represented in the positive attraction figures for Soft Adventure enthusiasts, where over 2.5 times as many people claimed to have visited Alberta and British Columbia over other provinces. (RR&C, 2003b) Alberta (18%) and British Columbia (19%) are acknowledged for their disproportionately high resident base of Hard Outdoor Adventure enthusiasts when compared with the rest of the country. (RR&C, 2003a, p. 7)

Of the Canadian provinces, Quebec and Alberta demonstrate the highest percentage of tourists produced in the Soft Adventure enthusiast category. This would suggest a key target market for the Shuswap Hut and Trail routes will be from short-haul trips originating in Alberta.

Of the Soft Adventure enthusiasts in Canada the majority are between the ages of 18 and 44, and equally divided between 18 – 34 and 35 – 44. They live in adult-only households (67%) with a higher than average income of \$55,200 (1998 dollars), 26% having at least one university degree, and 40% having “some other form of post-secondary education.” (RR&C, 2003b, p. 3,4) Because of the lower age of this segment, they are more likely to have children than the average domestic traveler.

Of winter outdoor activity enthusiasts in Canada, a notable 91% are more likely to be Canadian-born, with the majority living in adult-only households (67%) with an average income of \$55,800, 20% having at least one university degree, and 41% having “some other form of post-secondary education.” (RR&C, 2003c, p. 4)

Interestingly only 4% are 65 or older, however national aging trends change this profile significantly. The CTC tourism activity motivation analysis on the hiking and backpacking travel market (J. Rogers, 2003b) projects that by 2025 the American market for Canada will grow by 31%, while the Canadian segment will grow by 11%. (p. 8)

The report continues by asking the following questions:

- Will an older market be seeking wilderness experiences that are as physically challenging as those being sought today?
- What cross-packaging options are likely to attract this older market?
- Will a blend of “comfort, culture, nature” become more enticing as this market segment ages?
- What [are] the implications of a potential market with even *more* affluent, older, sophisticated American tourists. . .for marketing, product development and partnerships in the future?

(J. Rogers, 2003b, p. 9)

Anecdotal supporting evidence from a review of other systems internationally would suggest a shifting appetite from traditional backpacking and self-sufficient tent camping corresponds with rising interest in ecologically sensitive hut-to-hut based outdoor travel experiences. The CTC projections would suggest growing market share potential for more fully catered cabin based “soft” wilderness travel experiences, particularly from an older, more affluent, educated American “baby boomer” segment.

As well, a blend of outdoor recreation will likely be desired, including day and half-day options for trail based experiences. In a survey of adventure travel and outdoor sports show attendees in Chicago, the CTC (2003) found that over half (53%) had participated in “guided one day or half day activities in the past five years.” (p. 6) Of these respondents, 23% purchased packages with just one activity, “while 34% had purchased packages that included multiple types of activities.” (CTC, 2003, p.6)

The annual World Travel Monitor Forum (M. Baginski, 2004) points to a current trend as the general population ages, seeing “demand for authentic experiences, including local culture and closeness to nature” continuing to increase. (CTC Tourism Daily, Jan. 13, 2004) Ageing projections show growth rates in Heritage Enthusiasts increasing by 36% and performing arts enthusiasts by 44%. (RR&C, 2003a, p. 21)

The CTC motivation studies (RR&C, 2003a) show considerable overlap amongst activity market segments throughout all age groups. 40% of the Canadian Soft Outdoor Adventure segment overlaps as heritage enthusiasts and 34% as performing arts enthusiasts (p. 5); and “approximately one-third of each [American] culture/heritage-oriented segment is also in the Soft Outdoor Adventure Enthusiast segment.” (p. 6)

These trends are important when considering the Shuswap Hut and Trail concept's viability. They suggest reasonable market advantage and targeted visitor segments exist to support a regional trails-based outdoor recreational travel experience; and that maximum advantage can be leveraged by focusing on:

- the trail system's ability to create market-ready experiences for the *soft* outdoor adventure enthusiast
- adequate facilities and/or trail management plans that can accommodate higher end, fully catered and guided experiences
- partnerships with regional heritage and cultural opportunities including the Shuswap First Nation, cultural organizations and festivals, historic sites and museums, and local community-life opportunities including the agricultural history of the region
- increased infrastructure to support day trips linked to local communities and existing accommodations

Projections associated with the U.S. travel market should be tempered, however. This past year has seen significant decline in U.S. cross border visitors. In 2005 same-day auto travel from the U.S. dropped by 12.0 per cent. (Conference Board of Canada, 2006) Key influences are identified as the strengthening Canadian dollar reducing the cost advantage for Americans, and recent announcements of border wait times and tightening passport laws.

Despite the slow down in cross-border U.S. travel, visitors from the U.S. still present an important target market for the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative. A recent study of U.S. outdoor enthusiasts in Chicago (CTC, 2003) suggested positive interest in Canada was high (66%), but with 47% saying they would “probably” travel to Canada, and 31% saying they were undecided. (p.2) The study concludes that these “probable” respondents will likely need to be convinced or enticed with attractive offers. By implication, the SH2H will need to consider ways in which it can positively attract dormant interest within the U.S.

International Overseas Visitor Potential

Unlike the U.S. travel market, the Thompson Okanagan experienced significant increases from overseas travel markets in 2004 of 40% (Tourism BC, 2005) suggesting a rebound from negative travel impacts from SARS and the war in Iraq in 2003. (p. 1) This trend appears to have continued in 2006. (Conference Board of Canada, 2006)

International visitor potential for the Shuswap Hut and Trail initiative would appear to initially rest in the European and Australian/New Zealand markets. In the Thompson-Okanagan region, while overseas leisure travelers identify general sightseeing as their main purpose for visiting, 21% of the European visitors identified outdoors/wilderness activities a main reason for travel to the region. (Tourism BC, 1998)

However, the rapid expansion of China as a new source of interest in Canada and British Columbia is worth further analysis.

Growing a Mountain Bike Destination

“Some days during the summer we’ll give out 10 or more mountain bike trail maps to people passing through on their way to other areas in the Province. Why not create a reason for them to stay here in the Shuswap?”

(Tom Peasgood, Skookum Cycle and Ski, interview, Dec. 16, 2004)

A creative strategy for mixed-use mountain bike terrain, accessed by both local and visiting riders shows promise for the Shuswap. Authenticity of the mountain bike trail riding experience is often judged by the perceived involvement of a local, passionate riding community. The destination can grow out of the reputation of the local riding community and the trails they are building, attracting visitors to stay and ride for multiple nights. Examples in British Columbia include Nelson, Rossland, Kamloops and the Vancouver North Shore.

Research indicates mountain biking is a significant travel motivator. Highlights from a 2003 survey of mountain bike enthusiasts (D. Green, 2003) provide the following insights into this market:

- 62% of respondents reported mountain biking 40+ times during the 2002 season.
- 89% participated in cross-country riding, 65% in dirt road or rail-trail riding, and 23% in freeriding
- Respondents listed outdoors/scenery, exercise, and challenge as primary reasons for enjoying mountain biking
- 80% of respondents had taken a trip of at least one or more nights to go mountain biking
- The average length of a mountain biking trip was 4.6 nights
- 45% prefer to camp on mountain biking trips, while 40% favor small lodges/inns
- Key factors influencing destination choice included reputation of destination, recommendation from a friend/relative, and internet research
- Features that influence destination choice were cited as variety/difficulty of terrain, number of trails, scenery. Reputation as a mountain biking destination, cost of trip, weather, strong mountain biking

community/culture, ease of getting to the destination, other facilities (bike shops, accommodation), and availability of other outdoor activities were secondary motivators.

(D. Green, 2003)

In 2004 the International Mountain Bike Association rated British Columbia the number one mountain bike destination in the world, (as cited by C. Dadson, 2006) supporting suggestions the province has an enviable position within the international spot light.

A recent study of mountain bike users in the Sea to Sky corridor by the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (D. Green, slide presentation, 2006) show preliminary findings that confirm a substantial travel market for mountain bike destinations in British Columbia, with 57% of the riding parties being non-resident to the area, and 20% planning on staying overnight. (p. 10). Of this segment, 83% were from British Columbia's lower mainland, suggesting a significant target market for in-province travel to other regions. (D. Green, 2006, p. 12)

Demographic profiles of the riding parties show a dominance of male (77%) over female (23%) mountain bike users, with average age groupings between 19-29 (27%), 30-39 (41%), and over 40 (22%). (D. Green, 2006, p. 10) Average riding party sizes ranged between 2.5 and 3.6 people. (D. Green, 2006, p. 11-13) This may suggest smaller cohort riding experiences are preferred over larger group travel experiences.

Further demonstrating the potential for British Columbia as a mountain bike destination, the Kootenay Rockies Tourism association has created an outstanding regional travel guide targeting mountain bike trail enthusiasts. (Kootenay Rockies Tourism, 2006) The guide recognizes the growth potential mountain biking has for the region, identifying six specific types of rider experience: Freeride/Downhill, Cross-Country/All-Mountain, Bike Parks, Rails to Trails, Tour Operators, and Road Touring. (p. 1)

In the Shuswap, the ongoing development of local mountain bike trails reveals a lively, committed and willing local core of people. Consistent with the rest of the province, however, most of these trails are being created as illegal trespass trails within the Crown land base. Sustainable development of mountain bike trails will require stakeholder and government approval.

Growth potential for mountain biking in the Shuswap would appear to be highest in the Freeride/Downhill, Cross-Country, and Bike Park user categories, with some road touring options that warrant further consideration. Epic Rides – “signature and historic trails that offer bikers an extraordinary challenge” (MBTA, 2006, p. 2) – also hold significant promise for the Shuswap region, with the current Larch Hills Traverse pilot trail project leading the way. Other Epic style trails have been proposed in the Inner Shuswap, Skimikin and North Shuswap.

As well, races, festivals and events hold considerable promise, as do community-based programs (MBTA, 2006)

Anecdotal information from local bike retailers suggests as many as 10 to 15 requests for local mountain bike trail maps are received each day throughout the summer. (T. Peasgood, 2004) And local landowners have experienced repeat requests from drive through mountain bikers to access trails on their property. (V. Pukas, interview, 2005)

Of particular note, the Little Shuswap Indian Band has entered a 20-year deal with Kamloops Bike Camp & Tours providing pay-to-ride trail experiences based out of Quaaout Lodge. A recent article in Bike Magazine (2006, November) – a mainstream U.S. based publication – covered a story on the LSIB/KBC partnership, noting an anticipated 600 guests in their third year of operation, with most of those visitors coming from Alberta and Washington state. (p. 40)

Hut-to-Hut Specific Market Assessment

Direct interviews with other hut-to-hut operations suggest that current trends in the outdoor non-motorized recreation and travel market will favour increased hut-to-hut travel opportunities. In interviews, the Colorado 10th Mountain Division Hut Association (J. Ayotte, 2005) indicated successful long-term market viability of their 29 hut system connected by 350 miles of trail. This is based on an average operating capacity of 60-63% consistent over the past 7 years. (J. Ayotte, 2005, p. 8)

The Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association canvassed other U.S. hut operators to determine feasibility parameters for a proposed hut-to-hut system in the Chugach National Forest leading to the Mills Creek-Iditarod Trail Hut-to-Hut System Proposal (AM&WHA, 2004). Within this study of other hut operations they identified an apparent trend toward providing somewhat greater privacy for hut users. (J. Ayotte, 2005, p. 16)

In a recent study of hut users, the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association (RRC Associates, 2005) found:

- hut users in both winter and summer were most likely between the ages of 25 and 54 (84% each season)
- most hut users were from within the system's home state of Colorado (82-83%), suggesting a short-haul local target market was sufficient to sustain the 29 hut operation
- winter user profiles showed higher use by couples (32%) and singles (28%) with no children, while summer hut use was more popular with couples and singles (33%) with children.
- most winter and summer hut users are repeat visitors (65 and 83% respectively)
- average stay in huts is two nights, but ranges between one and three nights before dropping off at four and five nights; with average trip length being just under 3 nights.
- a wide range of travel party sizes was measured from two to sixteen.
- mode of travel to huts in winter shows 70% skiing and 23% snowshoeing, and in summer 34% hiked and 16% mountain biked. (Note: summer access directly by vehicle accounts for 49%)
- regarding motorized and non-motorized travel, the study suggests the majority of non-motorized users are not supportive of motorized access to the huts. They are generally supportive, however, of llama packing and horse packing
- 81/84% "greatly enjoy" multi-night trips to a single hut, while 60/69% greatly enjoy multi-night trips to two or more huts
- over 90% of all respondents, winter and summer, considered a quiet backcountry experience to be very important

- most hut visitors express comfort sharing huts with others, but acknowledge some problems could arise depending on the type of people in other groups
- most hut users indicate they will still be using the huts in ten years

(pp. 3 – 27)

The Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm & Associates, 2002) identified two general markets or user groups for a cabin-to-cabin trail system:

Lake-based cabins would appeal to those who enjoy “softer” water activities like swimming, boating, fishing and nature viewing. The report identifies this group as similar to the market attracted to lodge or destination resorts: affluent, seasoned travellers willing to pay for a unique outdoor experience combined with comfortable accommodation and high quality amenities. (M. Chisholm & Associates, 2002, p. 118)

Cabins on trails and in the alpine would be more rustic, appealing to skiers, mountain bikers, hikers, or horseback riders seeking a more backcountry experience. The report goes on to suggest trail-based cabins have more appeal for those seeking an adventurous wilderness experience. These users are more inclined to enjoy moderate to high challenge, solitude, and a respite from other people. (M. Chisholm et al, 2002, p. 118)

The study goes on to note trail-based recreational users are more likely to:

- seek recreation within a pristine environment,
- prefer minimum development and limited modern conveniences
- travel in small groups, with little tolerance for other people
- and may seek multi-day camping or cabin experiences

(M. Chisholm et al, 2002, p. 118)

There appears to be opportunity for both high and low end target markets within the proposed Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative. While basic wilderness hut facilities may tailor well for the self-sufficient independent adventure traveller; opportunities for high-end, “soft” adventure lodge, lakeside and trailhead resort products show considerable promise, and may well present an integrated strategy.

The Adventure Okanagan Cooperative/Bearfoot Canada’s *5 Rings Trail Strategy* (D. Elzer, 2004) includes a trailhead cluster concept aimed at integrating current provincial support for increased lodge and resort capacity. This strategy would lend itself well to creating the linked resources to support a higher end overnight travel experience within a trail and waterway system. The recent development of two new backcountry cat-ski lodges in our region would also suggest potential for year-round, high-end backcountry user groups.

Gilles Valade, chair of the Thompson Rivers University Adventure Guide Program (Interview, January 2005) cautions trying to be everything to everybody, and encourages a careful look at both high and low end hut use. What will generate the necessary economic benefits to sustain the operation? Valade (2005) observes that an operation will get more out of a high end product, even if it costs more. He also senses a trend away from low end users and product experiences.

Valade (interview, 2005) does suggest a parallel hut-to-hut system with both low end and high end hut facilities along a route may be feasible, citing examples within the Appalachian Trail system.

Interestingly, the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association (RRC Associates, 2005), when surveying hut users on interest in different service levels received overwhelming consensus for “equipped huts” that included bunks with padding, solar lights, stove, kitchen & all utensils. (p. 28) Increased service levels, including options where hut custodians prepare meals and guides provide educational enhancements, received significant “not at all interested response.” (p. 29)

It is likely this is a reflection of the established clientele already using the Colorado hut system, rather than a general trend. It suggests that introducing catered/guided groups is likely to cause incompatible challenges where self-sufficient, independent travel groups have already established ownership over the hut experience.

Within the Shuswap, local support for creating hut-to-hut overnight opportunities is high. When surveyed, 98% of the respondents said yes they supported the concept. Interestingly, however, when asked if they would use backcountry huts for overnight trips in the Shuswap, local residents indicated a 57% likelihood that they would not. This suggests the huts role in anchoring a more permanent trail system in the Shuswap is valued by local residents, but that sustainable use of the facilities will be dependant on non-resident visitors.

The above would seem to support including amenities within select sections of the proposed hut-to-hut system that have the capacity to cater to high end use. At the very least, adaptable lodges should be designed that can be booked for exclusive use by guided, catered, and educational program groups.

Need further analysis of what high and low end market is looking for

The *Keep Exploring* Brand Canada and “Explorer” Profiles

The new *Canada: Keep Exploring* tourism branding strategy (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2005) focuses on the types of real benefits a person is hoping to receive from a travel experience – note the focus on “experience.” The strategy is intended to appeal to curiosity and the desire to see new things and have unique experiences. (J. Chretien, as cited in CTC eNews, May 13, 2005)

As part of the new national marketing strategy, nine broad “explorer” profiles were developed based on how people relate with their surroundings and the types of experiences they seek. (G. Danis, 2006) These profiles are worth considering when assessing potential use of an integrated hut and trail outdoor travel experience, and in the preparation and target of integrated marketing communications.

Conclusions on Targeted User Groups

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the preceding discussion of market trends and potential user interest:

- **That nature-based, non-motorized trail experiences within the Shuswap Hut and Trail initiative (SH2H) be designed and targeted for the soft outdoor adventure enthusiast** – hiking, paddling, skiing/snowshoeing, equestrian

- **That trail infrastructure plans accommodate a wide range of non-motorized user interest**, with particular attention to accessible day use trail options within the first 1000 to 6000 meters of key trailhead locations
- **That special emphasis be placed on creating suitable infrastructure for mountain bike experiences within the region**, especially ones that can help to differentiate the region from other areas of the Province. Consideration should include: accessible family oriented single track routes linked with communities and ideally paralleling the lake, purpose built trail systems dedicated to a logical progression of increased skill from novice to experienced, longer cross-country “epic” rides attractive to hard adventure enthusiasts but suitable for intermediate users, options to combine outdoor paddle and bike recreational experiences, and point-to-point overnight destination rides (hut-to-hut, hut to trailhead accommodation, and trailhead accommodation to trailhead accommodation).
- **That hut facility plans enhance user awareness within the natural environment**, considering location, layout, use of natural light, view scape, building materials and ecologically sustainable technologies in their design, as well as providing comfortable spaces for people to be together and learn together.
- **That hut facility plans consider the integration of higher end, fully catered and guided experiences**, including consideration for private room options within hut-to-hut sections deemed to have a high destination appeal (Anstey Highland Route, Shuswap Water Trail, Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route). At the very least, adaptable lodges should be designed that can be used by guided, catered, and educational program groups.
- **That regional heritage and cultural partnerships be established** including the Shuswap First Nation, cultural organizations and festivals, historic sites and museums, and local community-life opportunities including the agricultural history of the region
- **That initial marketing and promotion efforts be targeted** at a) short-haul mountain bike visitors from the Vancouver Lower Mainland, Alberta, and Washington State, b) Canadian and U.S. *soft* adventure, heritage and cultural travel enthusiasts, c) European, Australian, and New Zealand *soft* adventure activity enthusiasts. (Further target market analysis will be needed to more accurately position the SH2H before these market segments.)
- **That longer-term marketing objectives target** an ageing, active retirement population of *soft* adventure enthusiasts, especially in B.C., Alberta, and Washington; placing a growing emphasis on combined heritage, cultural and ecological learning experiences.

Review of Existing Hut-to-Hut Trail Systems

See Case Studies of Three Hut-to-Hut Operations prepared for this consultation (J. Ayotte, 2005)

Section Four: Benefits and Challenges

A Legacy of Benefits to the Communities of the Shuswap

“Clear communication of intrinsic values and potential economic impacts will help decision makers recognize rivers, trails, and greenway corridors as vital to the well-being of a community.”

(U.S. National Park Service, 1995, p. v)

Through the course of the Phase 1 consultation and research process the benefits of a linked hut-to-hut trail circuit throughout the Shuswap has been explored. A summary of recognized benefits include:

- the value of developing nature-based recreation resources for use by all in the community
- the long term economic benefits to the region, specifically through the creation and retention of local business and job opportunities
- the promotion of understanding and respect for our natural environment
- the opportunity to support new approaches to sustainable natural resource management between First Nations, recreational, business, community, and ecological partners (including an opportunity to define the term “sustainable” in terms of measurable criteria)
- the value of adding non-motorized, nature-based travel to our region’s reputation for natural beauty and outdoor pursuits
- the creation of a new tourism resource with potential for strong shoulder and four-season travel product opportunities
- the ability to strengthen regional identity and leverage international exposure through trail-linked communities
- the promotion of health and personal well-being
- the increase in profile and support for local trail development and planning initiatives
- the establishment of a new level of local involvement in the management of our region’s natural resource capital

(Chisholm et al, 2002; Elzer, D., 2004; Go for Green, 2006; Lane, B., 1999; Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, BC, 2005; Nova Scotia Trails Federation, 2002; Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, 2005; Trailswest, 1998)

Addressing Issues

Throughout the course of the initial consultation period, several key issues were raised as the top issues to address. These included:

- wildlife and habitat protection

- cooperation between motorized and non-motorized recreational users
- impact to adjacent property

The consistency with which these were raised throughout the region, and across all stakeholder sectors is notable and suggests a strong sense of common values throughout the region. It is the belief of the author that these are important starting points in negotiating multi-stakeholder strategies that will have lasting resilience in the years ahead.

Social/Lifestyle and Health and Wellness

ref economic benefits of health lifestyle

Committed to Multi-Use Cooperation

Also raised as a top issue regionally by both motorized and non-motorized recreational advocates, concern was expressed that a new trail had the potential to both put pressure on existing recreational users (ATV, snowmobile, hunting), and attract unwanted new motorized users. Situations that have resulted in ugly confrontations within communities were referred to both in BC and Alberta.

Interestingly, these confrontations did not materialize during the Shuswap consultation. Both a commitment by the SH2H organizers to work cooperatively, and a clear message that they had no intention of trying to displace existing use, has made space to build a relationship initially with the regional snowmobile clubs. And a newly forming ATV club based in Sicamous allowed the first formal conversation with an organized group of summer-motorized users. Commitments have been made to sit down with maps and cooperatively consider trail locations. Evidence over the past 16 months would suggest the Shuswap has no need to import the conflicts from other regions, and can demonstrate that cooperation is possible from the outset.

It should be noted that concern over increasing habitat access and environmental damage by motorized vehicles, especially in the higher sub-alpine and alpine plateaus, was consistently raised. Possibly the most asked question has been: “how will you ensure motorized users will not access non-motorized trails.” Several base strategies have emerged:

- **adopt the working principles of the Off-Road Vehicle Coalition in BC** – a multi-association lobby group of motorized users – who have presented new policy legislation to the provincial government.

Principles include:

- a commitment to work together in trust and cooperation between user groups
 - support for legislated licensing and registration, and the creation of enforceable laws for ORVs
 - registration fees linked to a trust fund for education and safety, consultative trail development, enforcement, and conservation and stewardship.
- **plan routes cooperatively** with the Shuswap Snowmobile Association and clubs, off road vehicle organizations and affiliates, and local individual users where possible;

- **utilize appropriate trail designs to filter for intended use** (signage, terrain, grade and obstacles help to communicate appropriate use and filter access);
- **cooperatively build and deliver an educational campaign for all users** demonstrating appropriate trail etiquette and directing people to designated areas (use signs, community programs and presentations, website, targeted marketing);
- **train staff, volunteers, guides and commercial operators as trail stewards.** They become both educator and patrol warden. The International Mountain Bike Association's bike patrol program organizes and trains volunteers to "inform, assist, educate" (IMBA, 2006). In some systems, enhanced authority to issue warnings and tickets has even been extended. (Nova Scotia Trails Federation, 2002)

Hike, Bike, Equestrian Cooperation

In general, consultation feedback suggests a positive and cooperative approach to shared trail use between hikers, mountain bikers and equestrian riders is favoured. Certainly the demonstrated advantages of this approach have been well modelled through the Shuswap Trail Alliance's approach to engage stakeholder groups.

The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance includes representation from the Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen's Society of British Columbia. Our local chapter maintain and develop trails throughout the region including the trail system around Skimikin Lake. There is a strong commitment to work cooperatively amongst the partner members of the Alliance.

The Backcountry Horsemen Society of British Columbia have identified bicycles on trails as a common cause of startling horses. It seems the silence and motion of the bicycle may be of concern. Planning for safety, determining best practices, and educating recreational users is a core commitment of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance.

We have agreed that working together is the best route forward both from a development and long-term maintenance point of view. It is important for co-use of trails to be carefully planned with an educational strategy in place including signage. In some cases, trails work well as co-use trails. In others, separate trails will be more appropriate.

In the case of the Rubberhead Trails, for example, the intention is to identify and develop trails specifically with bicycling in mind, in part to localize intensive mountain bike use to this area and free other trail areas to be more multi-use sensitive. It also responds to a growing trend toward trail riding by bicyclists in the region.

Planning of the Larch Hills Traverse route, however, will include equestrian use. The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance will continue to act as a meeting forum for the local non-motorized trail groups, and will include these trails in their ongoing monitoring and discussions.

Educational strategies are also a benefit of a shared planning approach. Exchange of knowledge includes both helping different user groups understand each other, and providing practical strategies to respond. For example, hikers are now learning through the Backcountry Horsemen that stepping off the downhill side of a side hill trail when meeting horse and rider is preferable. (L. Lenglet, email, February 28, 2006)

A Working Forest Under Crown Authority

The intrinsic values of well designed, signed and maintained natural greenway corridors for non-motorized recreational travel (environmental, health and recreational) are justifiable ends unto themselves. However, within the largely industrial landscape of the Shuswap watershed a discussion of the trail and waterway system's potential economic impacts is of equal importance.

The reality of the Shuswap region is that much of the land base is tenured for commercial purposes including forestry, rangelands, trapping, and mining. And of this land base, the majority is crown land managed under the provincial land resource management agencies. Front and backcountry within the Shuswap region is primarily "working" forest, which becomes a dominant consideration when assessing both the recreational and economic potential for any nature-based activities.

True "wilderness" defined by intact ecological systems with little or no signs of human influence are rare in the Shuswap watershed, confined primarily to a few higher alpine areas in the east and north. Increasingly, commercial recreational tenures are being added to these areas, particularly where winter recreational values have been high (e.g. Anstey Range, Pukeashun Mountain). For example: the range directly north of Sicamous, including both South and North Queest and the Anstey Range north to the Ratchforth/Pettipiece valley, are currently divided amongst two catski/ski touring tenures and two heliskiing operators. The remaining terrain in this area is designated as either multi-use, winter non-motorized, and non-motorized recreational zones under the Okanagan Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP). And while the designated recreational winter motorized zone managed by the Eagle River Snowmobile Club is primarily a public recreational area, it is seeing increased use by commercial sledding operators.

Economic Benefits

The scope of economic benefit analysis conducted for this report includes a review of existing literature and economic studies on trails, greenways, and hut systems; a primary survey of regional tourism operators; and a preliminary assessment of general public appetite for economic issues related to natural trail ways.

In reviewed studies, positive economic effects of natural trails for adjacent landowners, local communities and businesses have been consistently demonstrated. These include:

- increased expenditures in local communities by trail users
- related job creation
- stability and increases in adjacent property values
- new business expansion and start-up opportunities
- attraction of new money to communities
- enhanced tourism and recreation business opportunities
- generation of revenue from trail and infrastructure use
- tenure and tax revenues from operator use

- corporate/industry relocation and retention due to quality of life benefits
- public/government cost reductions (environmental and pollution control, infrastructure costs such as storm sewage and water management, health care)
- new special events and enhancements to existing events (sporting, cultural and recreational)

(Chisholm et al, 2002; Elzer, D., 2004; Go for Green, 2006; Lane, B., 1999; National Park Service, 1995)

In some cases, these economic advantages are substantial enough to warrant serious reconsideration of overall economic priorities for local communities.

Economic Impact Studies

Research on the economic impact of the Kettle Valley Railway Trail experience in the Okanagan Valley south of the Shuswap suggested:

Prior to the 2003 fires, the Myra Canyon trestles drew 50,0000 visitors a year, generating about \$5 million for the B.C. Interior economy. It has been estimated that once the trestles reopen in 2007, visits could double to 100,000 people a year. (“UBCO Studying Trestles,” 2006³)

This research led to involvement of both Tourism BC and the Province in substantially funding the rebuilding of trestle bridges following the devastating fires of 2003.

A study of mountain bike users in the Sea to Sky corridor spanning Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton (Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association, 2006⁴) confirmed a substantial travel market for mountain bike destinations in British Columbia, with 57% of the riding parties being non-resident to the area, and 20% planning on staying overnight. (p. 10). Of this segment, 83% were from British Columbia’s lower mainland, suggesting a significant target market for in-province travel to other regions. Economic analysis further suggested that:

*The trail systems of the North Shore, Squamish and Whistler, are estimated to have collectively generated **\$10.3 million** in spending from riders that live outside of the host community over the period from June 4 to September 17, 2006.*

Tourism BC (2004⁵) reports the overall economic value of nature-based tourism in the province saw 966,000 tourists (based on 2001 statistics) spend a total of \$908.9 million dollars while at nature-based tourism businesses in British Columbia. This figure does not include spending on route to and from the nature-based tourism business. The total GDP for nature-based tourism business was estimated to be \$782.9 million.

³ UBCO Studying Trestles. (2006, May 3). *Special – Story: 18223* (forwarded by D. Elzer, AOC, May 3, 2006)

⁴ Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association. (2007) *Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study*. Retrieved June 27, 2007 from http://www.mbta.ca/News/?sp=Sea_to_Sky_Economic_Impact_Study

⁵ Tourism BC. (2004) *Economic Value of the Commercial Nature-Based Tourism Industry in British Columbia*. Retrieved (n.d.) 2005, from <http://www.tourismbc.com/PDF/Economic%20Impacts%20of%20CNBT.pdf>

In response to this compelling evidence, and in response to wide spread interest and development in regions throughout the province, British Columbia has created a substantial new program dedicated to the creation of a provincial trails strategy now moving into the second phase of development. (MTSA, 2007)

A recent study on the economic impact of the proposed expansion of Waterton National Park into the Flathead region of south eastern British Columbia (J. Johnson et al., 2005) concluded that despite displaced timber harvest from the traditional economic base of the region, “park expansion would provide significant economic opportunities to surrounding communities by lessening the dependency on traditional resource extraction, taking advantage of protected natural amenities and technological advances in transportation and communications.” (p. 6) These new economic advantages were demonstrated to mitigate and outweigh the modest loss to merchantable timber harvest.

It would seem these conclusions are supported by similar findings produced by the U.S. Forest Service. Reports suggest “outdoor recreation and general ecology uses of National Forests are now of much greater economic value than timber harvest.” (as cited by P. McHugh, 2006, p. 1)

Of particular interest in the Flathead study was the attraction of what were termed “amenity migrants” to the area. Proximity to a protected natural wilderness area was cited as a primary factor in transforming rural economies from being extractive dominant to “natural amenity-based.”

As a result of their competitive advantages in natural amenities (easy access to relatively pristine parks and recreational opportunities, clean air and water, friendly, small-town character, and open, natural settings), these regions have developed vibrant, high-quality economies that act as beacons for retirees, young families and entrepreneurs alike who seek stable, safe communities in which to live, work, and invest.

(J. Johnson et al., 2005, p. 10)

These findings have significant implications for economic development in the communities of the Shuswap where natural lifestyle is consistently named as a key attractor to the region.

In considering current trends in the region (shortage of labour base, inflated real estate, limited affordable housing for lower and middle income positions, historic fluctuations in forest industry affecting consistent employment, impending climatic and environmental changes, the need for industry diversification, and growing retirement population) the benefits of diversifying the economic base to include natural amenities warrants serious attention.

The study found that where rural communities have developed natural amenity-based development strategies:

... economic growth is driven largely by the influx of people into the community: retirees seeking lower-cost, lower-stress lifestyles; younger families searching for safe and stable neighbourhoods in which to raise their children; and entrepreneurs and knowledge workers who, having the transferable skill-sets so important in the 21st century, see opportunities to live, work and invest in communities that provide high-quality nature-based lifestyles.”

(J. Johnson et al., 2005, p. 11)

The goals of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative is not to purposely interfere with the extraction-based economy of the Forest industry, but rather, to establish the importance of including an amenity-based economic strategy in the overall regional land management plan. The creation of a world-class network of natural trails and waterway routes anchored within an intact greenway corridor (a linear wilderness park) holds significant potential for competitive advantage, lifestyle attraction, and ultimately, new economic sustainability for the Shuswap. Any real consideration of this potential will need to be addressed at the level of the provincial land resource management departments together with community, industry and environmental stakeholders.

Increased expenditures in local communities by trail users

While specific expenditures by trail users were not surveyed within the scope of this report, sufficient secondary data exists to provide a reasonable range of potential expenditures and argue for the importance of municipal and regional trail ways.

Local business owners have pointed to the potential a well-established trail system would offer promoting both direct sales related to recreational trail use, and indirect expenditures related to transportation, food and beverage, accommodation, and associated leisure services.

Market trends of particular significance to non-motorized outdoor recreational opportunities in the Shuswap would seem to suggest that growing expenditures in the areas of paddling, cycling and Nordic skiing could be expected. In a recent article to members, Mountain Equipment Cooperative chair, Linda Bartlett (2006) observes that current market trends seem to suggest “activities with the highest growth are those that can be practiced in a single day, such as snowshoeing, rafting, mountain biking, Nordic skiing, trail running, and climbing.”

The recent survey of hut users by the 10th Mountain Hut Association in Colorado (2005) demonstrated an average total per person expenditure of \$128 in winter and \$131 in summer. Of these expenditures, hut fees accounted for \$74/\$79 (winter/summer respectively), groceries at \$25/\$36 per person, and gasoline at \$21/\$20. All expenditures were within 50 miles of the trailhead, and are listed here in U.S. dollars. (p. 13)

In the most recent State of the Industry survey of outdoor recreational retail trends, the Outdoor Industry Association (LTG, 2005) notes growing trends in trail based participation levels for single track mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, snowshoeing, telemark skiing, and trail running. (p. 16) See the section on Market Trends earlier in this report for a more in-depth presentation of these findings.

A study of trail use in Nova Scotia (Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development and Tourism, 1999) found that the average per party spending by out of province trail visitors was “about \$1210 per party beyond a 30-minute drive and \$90 within a 30-minute drive of the trail.” The hiking/walking trails were believed to be directly responsible for about 12% of this direct spending

Limited Literature on Economic Shortfalls

Only one study in the preliminary survey of existing literature presented a negative or “no economic impact” assessment. An independent study of permit sales and tax revenue for the Prairie Spirit Rail-Trail in Anderson, Franklin and Allen Counties of Kansas (T. Presnell, 2000) demonstrated an annual deficit to the state of about \$36,000.

The study, however, focuses only on permit sales for which compliance continues to be an issue, and general sales tax revenues as an overall indicator of economic benefit within a community. It does not analyse benefits such as lifestyle, recreation or overall property value enhancement, nor does it address factors that have contributed to the trails inability to meet initially projected objectives such as barriers to new tourism development. The economic value of lifestyle, health, recreation, and ecological benefit is not considered within the scope of the review.

Several studies examined potential negative impact on adjacent property values. These are considered in the section on Adjacent Landowners and Trail Impacts following.

Currently, the primary existing stakeholders with a significant concern regarding negative economic impact to their operations are the regions major timber licensees. This relationship is considered further in the following section.

Cooperation with Forest Industry

There is compelling evidence natural trail and greenway systems can have a significant impact on local economies. Within the backcountry, however, nervousness has been expressed by existing forest-based industries when recreational and tourism user groups begin to move into traditionally Forestry dominant areas. Potential for both perceived and real conflict of use grows.

For the Forest companies, access to merchantable timber may become compromised. For the recreational and tourism interests, longevity of natural and aesthetic value is threatened and economic value significantly reduced. And to compound the concerns, recent studies such as those considered in the previous section (J. Johnson, 2005; P. McHugh, 2006) point to the economic advantage an amenity-based layer to the region's infrastructure can create. This implies a shift to the traditionally dominant extraction-based forest economy to intentionally plan for corridors of intact natural landscape.

A recent study on the economic benefits of managing forestry and tourism interests (BC Ministry of Forests, 2003) suggest that where the degree of alteration to the integrity of the natural forest viewscape increases, the higher the negative rating from visitors asked if they would consider returning to the area. It was found, however, that where timber harvest met provincial Visual Quality Class ratings of Partial Retention or better, public opinion increased significantly to 71% who said they would return to the area. Partial Retention refers to harvest alteration that is easy to see, but small to medium in scale, and natural not rectilinear or geometric in shape (BCMOFR, 2006, p. 15)

Note: Viewscape or Viewshed is defined by the BC Ministry of Forest and Range as "a physiographic area composed of land, water, biotic, and cultural elements that may be viewed and mapped from one or more viewpoints and that has inherent scenic qualities and/or aesthetic values as determined by those who view it." (BCMoFR, 2006, p. 15)

The study determined that given the "relatively minor difference between the volume of timber available for harvest under modification [large, natural appearance or small to medium, angular appearance] and partial retention systems. . .the least risky decision would be to adopt a partial retention system or even a retention system [small, natural appearance blocks]." (BCMoF, 2003, p. 25) A comparative examination of the economic

value for existing tourism operators and potential new harvest volume suggested that “managing the total viewscape identified as important to the lodge [targeted within the study] by using a range of visual quality constraints may return the greatest level of benefits to society.” (BCMoF, 2003, p. 25.)

Further study of public acceptance to forest alteration found that the defined Visual Quality Classes used by the Ministry of Forests and Range were a good indicator of public acceptance. (BCMoFR, 2006) In the survey:

- tourists were shown to be less accepting of forest harvesting than local residents,
- that people prefer selection harvesting (very small and not easy to distinguish from pre-harvest) to variable retention (easy to see, small to medium natural or non-rectilinear shaped) or clearcutting (removal of entire stand of trees from an area one hectare or greater),
- people were accepting of harvesting if at least 24% of the trees remain on site,
- people prefer harvest openings with good visual design,
- and that viewed from within the forest stand (as would be encountered along a trail), people strongly prefer dispersed tree retention to clearcut or patch retention.

(BCMoFR, online, 2006)

Conclusions from the survey recommend careful consideration be given to scenic areas that will be viewed by visitors to the Province. (BCMoFR, 2006) In these areas it is recommended that partial cutting and dispersed retention harvest design systems be used, and that at least 24% of the stand be maintained. And that where in-stand views will be encountered by the visiting public. . .”screening (no harvest), commercial thinning, or group selection” harvest techniques be used. (p. 14)

This report recommends these principles be considered when planning for the location and design of trails within the Shuswap Trail system. It also acknowledges the significant impact the establishment of new linear trail corridors could have within existing timber harvest license areas. To this end, planning and design of the trail system must be done cooperatively with timber license holders to ensure sufficient Visual Quality retention is maintained to leverage real recreational and economic advantages.

Current work with the Forest Planning office of Federated Cooperative Limited in locating the Larch Hills Traverse Trail has provided a model for this cooperative planning approach. In plotting the linear corridor for the 35 kilometre cross-country hike, mountain bike and equestrian trek, SH2H planners consulted directly with FCL with the objective of being considerate of their timer interests and locating areas with the least likelihood of being harvested. In turn, FCL has committed to working with the Shuswap Trail Alliance on “trail planning, local knowledge, and consultation with respect to timber development. . .to develop a logical trail network that will meet [SH2H] needs.” (G. Hislop, correspondence, May 30, 2005)

This commitment continues by the Shuswap Trail Alliance acknowledging it is not their “desire to impact access to FCL’s timber harvesting land base. In return, FCL commits that it’s future development will be considerate of the trail system.” (G. Hislop, correspondence, May 30, 2005) In several instances, FCL forest planners were willing to consider slight revisions to their cut plans in the interest of logical trail alignments. FCL planning foresters have

also indicated a willingness to use non-linear block designs and wildlife tree stand locations to enhance visual quality where feasible. Both Louisiana Pacific and Tolko Industries have demonstrated a willingness to provide similar information and direction.

Where Possible Seek Routes with Long Term Sustainability

It should be acknowledged that the ability to plan cooperatively with the Forest companies is limited within the mandate and license of each company's timber harvest area. Any long term strategy to ensure stable, long-term trails that leverage the maximum recreational, environmental and economic potential of the landscape as a recreational and tourism resource will require a more permanent degree of guaranteed protection, including corresponding viewscape management along the length of trail corridors.

Discussion with BC Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts Recreational Site Office would suggest the tools exist to establish long-term objectives for linear recreational trails. (K. Theissen, meeting, Mar. 23, 2006) Again, planning cooperatively with the Timber License holders, seeking routes that avoid planned harvest cuts where ever possible will increase the long term recreational and economic potential of any trail, allowing them to be designated within the Provincial land resource maps.

Within the proposed routes outlined in this document, only those trails that can be assured this kind of longevity should be designated as having high potential as a viable backcountry tourism destination route. Those that do not should be designated low to moderate for tourism potential, but may lend themselves to higher values for specialized recreational use such as free ride mountain bike terrain or winter ski touring or snowshoe areas.

Adjacent Landowners and Trail Impacts

Private landowners are important stakeholders in the successful creation of a regional trail system. The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance, ultimately, is interested in creating natural trail routes that benefit the environment, the community and individual stakeholders. Working closely with private landowners to determine the best location for trails is therefore essential to the overall success of the initiative.

According to the Nova Scotia Trails Federation (Project Initiation, retrieved 2005), "adjacent landowners are usually the most sensitive to a trail project entering the area." (p. 1.3.3) The well-developed wisdom of the NSTF observes that for private landowners it is not the value of the trail under dispute, but the "fear of losing privacy or quiet, and feeling vulnerable to strangers and criminals." (NSTF, retrieved 2005, p. 1.3.3)

Feedback from private landowners during the Shuswap Hut and Trail phase one consultation period has been generally positive. Support for the overall vision and values of the initiative have for the most part matched general public support. Early on during the publicity of the hut and trail concept, positive calls expressing support and interest in locating trails from private landowners were received.

Not surprisingly, however, enthusiasm becomes more variable as specific route and trailhead locations are proposed. As specific route plotting has progressed, some private landowners have proactively come forward with proposals for trail way access both near and on their property. Others have come forward expressing concern that proximity to trail ways may result in unwanted trespass, vandalism, and noise. This mixed response has been true of both permanent residences and holiday cabin owners.

Experience both from the regional district level and the municipal level confirms this range of cooperation. The current regional district park and trail way plans for Area C and F have encountered both strong support and isolated opposition from landowners directly adjacent to trail development. Similarly, the Salmon Arm Greenways Committee has experienced both strong encouragement and isolated opposition in creating a public system of trails throughout the municipality including extension to the foreshore trail through to Canoe Beach. In these situations, however, the expressed concern is primarily from specific individual property owners with respect to a particular section of green space proposed adjacent to their property. In most cases, cooperatively addressing landowner concerns has led to appropriate mitigating solutions.

Recent examples from the Shuswap initiative that demonstrate the diversity of response that can be expected include:

- A proposed trailhead access in Salmon Arm's South Canoe district utilizing existing trailhead parking has met with opposition from adjacent landowners. While expressing support for the general value of natural trails for hiking, cycling and equestrian use, initial response by adjacent landowners to the proposed access point has raised concerns related to privacy and quality of life, vandalism and potential damage to an existing irrigation water license, attraction of unwanted motorized use, increased fire hazard, legal liability and possible negative wildlife impacts.
- Meanwhile, in three other areas where the proposed Shuswap Trail would link with the municipalities of Salmon Arm and Sicamous, private landowners have approached the Trail Alliance actually requesting trailhead access points be considered on their properties. These property owners have cited the desire to use trails as ways to secure protection for natural green space, contribute to the overall quality of the community, enhance their own property values and quality of life, and create opportunities to be directly involved in controlling issues of unwanted access, vandalism, noise and garbage.

Support and concern over trail location and access reveal the depth of people's relationship to particular natural areas. The significance of these relationships requires care and attention by trail advocates. The Nova Scotia Trail Society (retrieved 2005) affirms this reality by encouraging one-to-one visits with landowners as the best way to build relationships and work toward successful trail solutions. The NSTS acknowledges the significant time commitment required during this phase of trail development. In every case it is important that trail advocates recognize the important role landowners hold as partners in the effort to create well designed, signed and maintained trail ways.

The Kootenay Columbia Trail Society

Of note in British Columbia, the Kootenay Columbia Trail Society (formerly the Trails for Rossland Society) received funding support from the BC Realtors Association to help pay for legal fees involved in establishing formal legal access to trails in the area. (Trails for Rossland, retrieved June 2006) Unlike the Shuswap region, 95% of the existing trails under consideration in a potential 300-kilometre system surrounding Rossland crossed private property. Through community consultation in the early 1990's these trails were determined to be "an important asset to the community's economic and mental health." (Trails for Rossland, retrieved June 2006, p. 1)

Advocates of the Rossland trail system recognized the importance of building strong relationships with private landowners. Their ten-year process has provided an excellent body of wisdom for other regions. Not without early struggles, the Kootenay Columbia Trail Society observes how “the Society board members and staff remained firm in their commitment to making the trail system work for the landowners first, and trail users second. Respect, good listening skills, persistence and a positive, we-can-make-this-work-somehow attitude helped the Society as it worked towards these goals.” (KCTS History and Background, n.d., retrieved Sept 2006)

The results of the Trails for Rossland Society’s legal work produced a successful template of agreement for trails that cross privately owned land. It is notable, too, that changes to the province’s Occupiers Liability Act combined with the additional coverage of the Society’s own liability insurance (at no cost to the landowners) addressed concerns of legal vulnerability where trails crossed private land. These tools are common to trail systems throughout the province of BC.

The Bruce Trail Association

Similarly, the Bruce Trail Association of Ontario, known as “Canada’s oldest and longest footpath” (BTA, 2006), demonstrates the ability to successfully create, build and maintain lasting natural trail ways of cooperative benefit between the environment, private landowners, and the wider community. First conceived in 1960 the success of the Bruce Trail Association was built on its partnerships with landowners along the 725-kilometre Niagara Escarpment trail system – now designated a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

Shuswap Agreements

Here in the Shuswap, allowance agreements for new recreational trails passing over private land have also been established. In Area C, for example, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District’s Parks planning office has successfully established a network of trails above Blind Bay, sections of which pass over privately owned land. And perhaps the most well known agreement of private land access in the region is that held for the Enderby Cliffs trail. These agreements serve as templates for future trails in our region.

Impacts on Adjacent Landowners and Property Values

“Trails are living things, shaped by their environment, usage, and the needs of those living along them.”
(Linda Strong-Watson, 2000, p. 12)

Reviews of existing trail impact studies on adjacent landowners reveal a remarkably consistent pool of data in favour of well designed and maintained natural trail corridors – or *greenways*. At the same time, the perceived negative impact of trails on adjacent properties is often expressed as a top concern by landowners when consulted prior to trails being established.

A survey of real estate agents and landowners in areas adjacent to Ontario’s Bruce Trail revealed 70% of adjacent landowners felt the trail was a “good neighbour”, and 70% of the real estate agents interviewed used the trail as a selling feature when advertising property. (Schutt, 1997 as cited by Trails Canada Go for Green Trail Monitor, retrieved 2005)

According to research documented by the U.S. National Parks Service, 77.7% of new home buyers rated natural open space as either “essential” or “very important,” with walking and bicycling paths ranked third. (American

Lives, Inc. 1995) And in a more recent survey sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders, homebuyers 55 years and older identified proximity to walking and jogging trails as the most desirable external amenity that would influence their buying decision (as cited in Oregon Trails, 2005) – a significant consideration when considering economic values for the Shuswap, one of Canada’s top retirement destinations. These findings are consistent with other studies in which adjacent property values are seen to consistently fluctuate between 5 to 32% higher than similar homes in the same market region. (U.S. National Parks Service, 1995)

It is notable that in British Columbia, the Trails for Rossland Society received funding support from the BC Realtors Association to help pay for legal fees involved in establishing formal legal access to trails in the area. (Trails for Rossland, retrieved June 2006) Unlike the Shuswap region, 95% of the existing trails under consideration in a potential 300-kilometre system surrounding Rossland crossed private property. Through community consultation in the early 1990’s these trails were determined to be “an important asset to the community’s economic and mental health.” (Trails for Rossland, retrieved June 2006, p. 1)

A recent study of greenways conducted in Surrey, BC determined that adding greenways increased property values by an average of just over \$4000 or 2.8 %. Depending on the nature of the greenway that figure increased to as much as \$17,515 or 10.2%. Linear greenway parks that included pathways realized the highest economic impact. (Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture, 2001)

Some negative impacts have been documented. According to Curran (2001), a number of studies found that areas with active recreation, especially where spikes in weekend use lead to parked traffic spilling onto nearby roadways, property values can be negatively impacted. The same was true where residents had safety concerns around existing trails. Generally, however, a review of the literature overwhelmingly demonstrates natural green spaces have a positive effect on adjacent real estate values. (Curran, 2001)

Of note here is the number of similar studies conducted throughout North America in both rural and urban communities. Consistently, the value of natural trail ways and the corresponding impact on property values near these trails has either increased or remained stable, allaying fears by property owners of negative impacts.

Based on a review of existing studies in the Economic Impact Assessment of the Trans Canada Trail through East Central Alberta, Price Waterhouse Coopers (2000) concluded that:

These studies, and many others, demonstrate that while there is typically strong initial opposition to trail development based on perceptions of what may happen, very few, if any, of the negative impacts actually occur once the trail has been developed and is operational for a period of time. In fact, most surveyed landowners are happy with the existence of the trail and feel that it is better than pre-trail development. (p. 23)

The consistency of this data would suggest further studies into the impacts and benefits of trail greenways on adjacent properties is unnecessary here in the Shuswap. Rather, a commitment to consultative planning that draws on the already well documented best practices in trail design strategies will better serve both the economic, environmental and quality of life concerns most commonly expressed by adjacent landowners in response to proposed trail way plans.

Strategies to Maximize Landowner Benefits

It would seem the gap between perceived negative damage to property values prior to a trail or greenway being established and positive evaluation following development is dependant on several key factors. According to the U.S. National Park Service (1995) “property value increases are likely to be highest near those greenways which:

- highlight open space rather than highly developed facilities
- have limited vehicular access, but some recreational access
- have effective maintenance and security.” (p. 1-5)

Results of the Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture Greenway Proximity Study (2001) would suggest the recommendations of the U.S. National Park Service’s report are best met when open green space is accessible by a limited trail or pathway. The Surrey study found where greenways had become overgrown (potentially as a strategy to discourage use) or were left as inaccessible natural spaces the potential for negative impacts actually increased. The highest economic contribution of value to adjacent properties came from parks with trails. (Surrey Parks and Recreation, 2001)

Well designed, maintained, and used greenways appear to hold higher overall value, and would also appear to challenge the concern that increased use of a trail might have a negative effect on adjacent properties. Add to this demographic research that would suggest average outdoor enthusiasts are more likely to express interest in nature, culture and the environment (CTC, 2003) – values that bode well for healthy trails that attract good users. Further supporting data suggests that anticipating trail users needs such as parking, garbage and washrooms in trail design tips the balance in favour of positive benefits for adjacent landowners.

A recent study of landowners living directly next to the Western Irrigation District Canal Pathway in Southern Alberta (L. Strong-Watson, 2000) reported that while issues of liability, dogs, compliance to permitted use, vandalism, policing, garbage, noise, loss of privacy, theft, trespassing, fire, fencing and ongoing trail maintenance had been raised as concerns during pre-trail consultations, “all of those interviewed expressed surprise at the extent to which expected problems have not materialized.” (p. 19) None of the landowners interviewed in the study expressed negative impacts from the trail, and felt the trail was “a benefit to the community, helped solve problems, and adds positive value to their property.” (p.21) Property along the trail includes agricultural, residential and some industrial.

Many of the landowners in the WIDCP trail study (Strong-Watson, 2000) identified problems with trespassing and partying before the trail was established, but noted these problems actually stopped after the trail was established. Factors that have contributed to these results were named as prevention of motorized vehicle access; good maintenance; signage; use of berms, low-maintenance natural planting, fences and landscaping; and the corresponding use by good trail users who “pick up after themselves.” (p. 21)

And where loss of privacy and noise were early concerns, even property owners whose homes were closest to the trail reported no concern over noise during the study. This is particularly significant when considered alongside the 26-kilometre trail’s average use of 20 to 50 people per day, with peak periods during spring and summer weekends surpassing 400. (Strong-Watson, 2000)

Concerns of garbage, noise, vandalism, vehicle traffic, parking and trespass are important considerations and do show up as negative impacts in some studies. In a detailed study conducted on the Northern Central Rail Trail in Maryland, (PKF Consulting, 1994) negative effects on property value were found when “high weekend use and spill over of user parking onto residential streets” were to blame. (as cited by D. Curran, 2001, p. 11) Appropriately directing user flow and managing volume issues such as parking are clearly important considerations in the successful design of trails adjacent to private property.

The same study, however, continues to demonstrate a significantly high positive return from proximity to the trail. 63% of the property owners living in close proximity to the trail believed the trail added an average of \$2459 to the value of their properties, over 90% of respondents within one mile of the trail recognized it as a positive selling advantage, and professionals interviewed confirmed the NCRT improved the ability to sell properties. (PKF Consulting, 1994, as cited by D. Curran, 2001)

In addressing strategies for successful trails near adjacent property, the British Columbia provincial guide to Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas (2002, 2005) recommends the following best practices:

- **preserve visual and physical buffers** to maintain personal privacy; align trails to use natural buffers
- **minimize intrusions by locating trailheads and trails away from residences** and other buildings
- **anticipate user needs for information, water, and washrooms** and provide for these in trail designs
- **educate for proper trail etiquette and keep noise levels down**, especially first thing in the morning and at night
- **provide consistent and easily recognizable signs** along roads when identifying trailheads
- **consider diverting trails to alternate routes for several days** during intensive agricultural activity
- **maintain a regular reporting schedule** that encourages feedback from landowners
- **recognize opportunities for direct farm marketing**, including interpretive signs, brochures, “farm fresh guides”, and tasteful advertising at trailheads to local farm markets (p.27, 29)

Good trail designs with appropriate mitigating strategies are required to positively impact adjacent property values and landowner satisfaction. A survey of best practises from other trail systems has assembled a wealth of successful practical strategies available to our Shuswap initiative. (Whistler, 2003; IMBA, 2005; Bruce Trail, 2001; Appalachian Mountain Club, 1995; BC Ministry of Agriculture, 2002, 2005; Nova Scotia Trails, retrieved 2005; Rossland, n.d., retrieved 2005)

Summary of Strategies Related to Adjacent Property

In summary, strategies to positively affect adjacent properties to trails include:

- trail placement away from immediate fence lines
- attractive fencing and use of natural visual buffer zones,
- clear signage and interpretive information,

- sensitively placed toilet and garbage facilities,
- limits to vehicle traffic and use of trailhead filters to physically impede motorized access,
- adequate parking at trailheads,
- on going maintenance strategies,
- incorporation of trail patrols to educate and enforce trail rules
- contracts for liability coverage
- and proactive community involvement.

Successful practical solutions for each of these strategies have been collected and will be chosen specific to each trail site. Many are already being implemented in the current trail plans underway through the Columbia Shuswap Regional District's Parks Planning office, local municipal greenway development, and by regional recreational societies like the Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of BC and the Larch Hills Nordic Society.

Commercial Land Developers

Private commercial land developers are a significant stakeholder in the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative.

At the time of this report, the Real Estate market is booming in the Shuswap. There is unprecedented redevelopment of existing properties and new development of previously undesignated properties throughout the Shuswap. While a review of economic benefit related to real estate and development will be considered later in this report, it is significant to note that in assessing current regional investment in trail way construction and maintenance, private developers figure prominently.

The Sicamous/Area E focus study area provides a telling example of the significant commitment to green ways and recreational trails by commercial property owners and developers. Support for the creation of a regional system of connected natural trail ways with formal links into the design of new land development has been expressed by Bayview Estates, Hyde Mountain Golf, Regal Resorts, Twin Anchors and the Old Town Bay Development, Vic Bates and Crazy Creek Falls. In the case of Bay View Estates and the Old Town Bay development, land planning already includes right of ways and infrastructure for greenway corridors. And permission to conduct trail routing exploration has been granted by Hyde Mountain Golf Course Developments and Regal Resort Developments.

Green Space and Land Development

A strong argument in favour of building protected natural green space and green corridors within land development plans also emerged from both consultation and literature research. An in-depth review of cutting edge ecological green design is not within the scope of this report. However, several case examples would suggest greenbelts combined with energy efficient design, construction and material choices can reduce overall development costs as well as result in reduced long-term costs.

The dedicated Sicamous/Area E consultation process demonstrated both municipal and developer interest in working cooperatively with the Shuswap hut and trail initiative. Positive interest in the benefits of linking

greenways within planned land development was received from Bayview Estates, Twin Anchors Old Town Development, Hyde Mountain Golf Course, and Regal Resorts. The District of Sicamous greenways vision plans for a linked trail network that includes waterfront walkways along the narrows and connections with the Eagle River nature trails and Old Town Bay.

Curran (2001) cites the increasing view by real estate developers and municipalities that “protecting natural areas is a sound economic and marketing approach to land development.” (p. 12) And Petit (1998) observes that the National Association of Home Builders has acknowledged the market advantage greening creates. (as cited in D. Curran, 2001, p. 12) Trail greenways play an important part in the developers overall design mix.

Tourism Potential

Studies of trail use and economic impact related to the Kettle Valley Railway trail system had significant influence on the decision to rebuild trestles following the devastating forest fire season of 2003.

Enhanced tourism and recreation business opportunities

Tourism BC (2004) reports the overall economic value of nature-based tourism in the province saw 966,000 tourists (based on 2001 statistics) spend a total of \$908.9 million dollars “while at nature-based tourism businesses in British Columbia.” (p. 9) This figure does not include spending on route to and from the nature-based tourism business. The total GDP for nature-based tourism business is estimated to be \$782.9 million.

Curiously for the Shuswap, despite consistently being cited for its natural lifestyle attraction and being recognized as a popular summer destination, according to the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (2002) tourism provides only a small 4 percent of the total basic income in the region.

Tourism Operators Interest Survey

As part of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative consultation, a region wide survey was conducted to gauge the potential benefits of the system to local Tourism operators. Of the respondents, 47% agreed, “that the hut and trail system would positively impact their business.” (G. Casselman, 2005, p. 2) The survey suggests:

- there is opportunity for year round operation
- since there is the potential for the trail system to be marketed provincially, nationally and internationally, there will be an increase in the exposure for the Shuswap region.
- the increased exposure will provide more marketing potential and attract more tourist visits.
- there is an opportunity for operators to employ more employees and restructure staffing to include more full-time staff.
- some respondents determined that the hut and trail system would allow them to take advantage of expanding their business into nature based tourism.
- it was determined there is great possibility of expansion in the networks amongst the tourism operators in the Shuswap region.

(G. Casselman, 2005, p. 2, 3)

Interestingly the study also revealed 32% of the operators were undecided if the trail system would have positive impacts, concluding there was a need for greater understanding by the region's operators regarding the role and potential for creating special tourism packages and alliances with other complementary operators.

Advantage for Bed and Breakfast Operators, Lodges and Resorts

I was surprised and pleased with the encouragement I was given [by the Shuswap Hut and Trail proposal] for my B&B and possible offshoots like Art, Historical and Cultural aspects being included on the trail systems.

(V. Harrison, Artist House B&B, Sicamous, email, Feb. 11, 2006)

Interviews during the Phase 1 consultation period would suggest the proposed trail and waterway system offers a particular opportunity of advantage for Bed and Breakfast, lodge and small resort operators in the Shuswap.

In a special focus on non-standard accommodation by BC Stats (C. Young, June 2004) smaller alternative lodgings have been "increasing their market share in every region of the province since 1995." (p. 4) The Kootenays has seen the largest growth in market share by non-standard accommodations (to 37% in 2003), including bed and breakfast operators, hostels, specialty resorts, work camps, and rental cabins.

The modern trend for tourism in BC – in every region – is away from hotels and motels and towards smaller and more specialized accommodations. This offers travellers in BC a wider range of experiences, and will likely present increasing competition against hotels and motels in the years ahead.

(C. Young, June 2004, p. 5)

Of note: based on 2002 study figures (M. Chisholm, 2002), Bed and Breakfast operators accounted for the largest number of accommodation businesses in the Shuswap at 77. RV/campground operators accounted for 38, and motels at 35.

Small accommodation operators whose clientele are attracted to soft outdoor adventure and natural wildlife encounters have identified trail way infrastructure as particularly valuable to enhancing their operations. Where the opportunity to integrate their facility within a point-to-point overnight travel experience exists, operators have expressed considerable interest. To this end, the Trailhead Destination Operators strategy discussed later in this report has received positive support.

Trailhead Destination Operators

Trailhead locations would provide comfortable and even luxurious accommodation after one to three nights in authentic mountain or lakeside cabins. Wildlife and scenery are spectacular along the routes and with the assistance of trained guides small groups have all the safety and excursion services that make this learning adventure world-class.

(D. Elzer, 2003, p. 16)

Adventure Okanagan Cooperative/Bearfoot Canada's 5 Rings Trail Strategy (D. Elzer, 2004), proposes the integration of existing local accommodation operators through a "Trailhead cluster" concept. Under the program small lodges, campgrounds, Bed and Breakfast operations, and backcountry resorts clustered around a trailhead access point are "branded as a destination unit." (p. 15, 19)

These Trailhead clusters would allow for multiple backcountry and outdoor travel experiences to be developed, supporting a new economic benefit for the operators and sustainability for the trail, waterway and hut system. And because the type of overnight accommodation facilities can define the travel experience, potential for both high and low end tours are feasible.

Discussion with local accommodation operators confirmed that the ability to be designated a Trailhead Destination within the proposed hut-to-hut trail and waterway system would be considered favourable, providing added promotional value and tourism product opportunities. (B. Acton, interview, April 8, 2005; M. McMillan, meeting, April 13, 2005; A. Artz, interview, Oct. 17, 2005; C. Lutterman, meeting, Jan. 25, 2006; P. Cox, meeting, Feb. 9, 2006; K. May, interview, Mar. 4, 2006; V. Harrison, meeting, June 22, 2006; R. Black, meeting, June 14, 2006; Salmon Arm Hotel Association, presentation, June 12, 2006)

This was supported by information gathered in the SH2H Tourism Operators Interest Survey (G. Casselman, 2005) that determined regional tourism operators saw the proposed hut and trail system as beneficial to their operations. (49% of these respondents recognized benefits of promotion and advertising, and 32% saw benefits of developing special packages for guests that incorporated the trail – p. 19, 20)

In exchange for official integration into all signage, promotional materials, marketing campaigns, website, maps, and travel guides, trailhead hosts would commit to providing an applicable combination of services that might include trailhead policing, maintenance, parking, and interpretive information to visitors. Participating operators would also commit to an interpretive program that enhances visitor knowledge of bio-diversity and ecologically responsible travel within the region. (D. Elzer, 2004, p. 19)

Each Trailhead Destination agreement would need to be developed according to the unique situation of the accommodation operator. In some situations, this may warrant a collective Trailhead partnership agreement. An example of this would be true of the Salmon Arm Hotel Association who have committed 20% of the proposed hotel tax toward the SH2H. In this case, a combined financial contribution would warrant shared return benefits to all of the accommodation operators that fall within the hotel tax boundary. Enhanced Trailhead Host status may be negotiable on top of this for individual operators located directly next to physical trailhead access points.

Further development of the "Trailhead Program" with AOC/Bearfoot Canada is needed.

Trailhead Inn-to-Inn Route Priorities

Interviews with existing backcountry lodge and front country accommodation operators suggest several high priority routes hold significant promise:

- **In the proposed Anstey Highland Route system**, conversations with backcountry cat ski lodge operators suggest a summer/early fall point-to-point hiking experience holds considerable potential (N. &

A. Holmes-Smith, interview, Oct. 18, 2005; D. Moore, interview, Nov. 30, 2005), with additional options for winter backcountry ski touring. This concept tour would link front country Bed & Breakfast and small accommodation operators in Sicamous with two backcountry lodges, connected by three or four huts. Round trip shuttle service via the Perry River Forest Service Road becomes feasible within this travel route. Extended route connections with Seymour Arm also present considerable opportunity, with round trip travel shuttle connecting with the lake ferry service.

- **The Larch Hills Traverse Trail** creates a three-way link between existing accommodation operators in Salmon Arm, Sicamous, and the Grandview Bench/North Okanagan Valley. Substantial opportunity exists to create community-to-community experiences for mountain bike, snowshoe, cross-country ski touring and equestrian travel, potentially linked to cabins within the Larch Hills Nordic system. Accommodation based day hikes and walks are also added through loop routes placed at each of the trailhead access points. Again, interviews with existing Bed and Breakfast operators suggest strong desire and support for this concept. (V. Harrison, meeting, June 22, 2006; V. & L. Pukas, interview, Dec. 2004, Sept. 20, 2006; R. Black, meeting, June 14, 2006; J. Thielman, interview, July 1, 2006; Salmon Arm Hotel Association, presentation, June 12, 2006)
- **Inner Shuswap Trail Route** links Sunnybrae and Herald Park with White Lake and Blind Bay via a series of connecting trails currently planned by the CSRD. The concept of linking trailhead accommodators to create point-to-point travel experiences is high in this region. The length of trail segments is between 10 and 15 kilometers, an ideal distance for people hiking on foot. The trail routes themselves present moderate elevation gains and diverse forest ecologies, with ridge viewpoints and creek side travel. Existing accommodation operators are already in place, and transportation shuttle services are easily accessed. Further trail extension along Blind Bay road link Sorrento and points further west. (K. May, interview, Mar. 4, 2006)
- **Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route** The Aboriginal Interest Department of the Little Shuswap Indian Band envisions expanded opportunities for cultural and eco-based outdoor tourism experiences. The LSIB sees preservation of historic aboriginal trails as a component to contemporary exercise of land title within their traditional lands and expansion of economic opportunity for the band. With Quaaout Lodge as a central trailhead, equestrian and hiking experiences connecting with the backcountry lodge at Grizzly Lake are envisioned. These would utilize the Big Bend Gold Rush routes through both Scotch Creek and Crowfoot Meadows. Connection with existing accommodation operators along the North Shuswap lake front would become a reality, with key trailhead accommodation centers in communities like Lee Creek, Scotch Creek, Celista, and Seymour Arm. Connection with backcountry huts or mobile yurts could create three to five day journeys between Quaaout Lodge, Grizzly Lake, and the Crowfoot/Mobley highlands. (B. Acton, interview, April 8, 2005; M. McMillan, meeting, April 13, 2005; A. Artz, interview, Oct. 17, 2005; C. Lutterman, meeting, Jan. 25, 2006)
- **Shuswap Water Trail Route** Existing overnight facilities are already in place along much of the 165 + kilometers of the lower and upper Shuswap river and Mabel Lake, including Mabel Lake Provincial Park,

and a series of riverside campsites along the upper Shuswap River between Kingfisher and Ashton Creek. Several multi-day accommodation based paddle experiences could be assembled relatively quickly, without the infrastructure development needed for land-based trails. The opportunity here is very much one of identifying existing facilities into a series of water-trail accommodation points with appropriate identity tools such as signage, maps, booking system, tour packages, and promotional strategy. The addition of hut facilities along some sections of this route could extend the potential for overnight paddling between existing accommodation operators. (R. Scott, correspondence, Nov. 25, 2005; P. Cox, meeting, Feb. 9, 2006)

Trail Greenways as Ecological and Health Service Providers

Much of the existing research on the economic impact of trails and greenways focus on direct spending measures within a traditional economy. More recently, however, studies are translating the intrinsic social lifestyle, health, recreation, and environmental benefits of trails and greenways into a demonstration of economic advantages.

Social and health benefits of stress-deflating natural green space and physical fitness through active travel are now being recognized for their direct impact on public and private expenditures. In a study conducted for the City of San Jose Department of Recreation (1988) it was found regular exercise resulted in 14% lower medical insurance claims, 30% fewer days in hospital, and 41% fewer claims greater than \$5000. (as cited by U.S. National Parks Service, 1995). Simply put: healthy citizens equal reduced health care costs.

The growing recognition of ecological systems services having direct cost parallels challenges traditional economic balance sheets. Concepts such as natural capital, eco-system services, and triple-bottom line budgeting demand a new look at the true economic advantages of natural greenways and trail corridors. Consider ecological services such as the value of a natural wetland water purification system or oxygen rich forests as essential life support system services.

In a recent study of economic benefits related to natural green space protection (D. Curran, 2001) additional cost-effective services were identified including: storm water management, habitat protection, recreation, aesthetics, groundwater capture, water and air quality improvements, non-motorized transportation, neighbourhood quality enhancement, and reduction in infrastructure servicing costs. (p. 6) Again, simply put: healthy habitat equals reduced infrastructure costs.

While these cost effective services related to green space retention are usually hidden, each bares a direct impact on the economic balance statements of a community. Current advancements in ecology and commerce are beginning to document and value these services within a traditional economic framework. Greenways and natural trail corridors help to anchor both services within municipalities and regions. They literally weave communities with green.

The Economic Value of Preservation

Quantifying the non-market value of rivers, trails and greenway resources is based on determining the total economic benefits of these resources including public outdoor recreational and preservation values. The U.S. National Park Service recognizes in its benefit-cost analysis of greenway resources both the willingness-to-pay by recreational users and the preservation value placed on a natural resource by people even if they do not use them. (U.S. National Parks Service, 1995)

Driver, Nash, and Hass (1986) found that while only six percent of the U.S. public used wilderness areas, between 60 and 95 percent were willing to be taxed to support their preservation (as cited by the U.S. National Parks Service, 1995, p. 9-11). This 60 to 95% of non-users are important players in the understanding of perceived value for natural resource areas.

For the Shuswap public interest survey, when asked if they supported the concept of creating an extended network of non-motorized recreational trails, 97% of the respondents said yes. But when asked if they would actually use longer non-motorized trails if they were developed, only 34% said yes, while 60% said no. (SHTA, 2006) This discrepancy in responses, while limited, may suggest a value is placed on knowing preserved natural areas are close by that can be accessed without actually needing or intending to access them. (It may also support the general trend favouring shorter day and half-day trail based experiences. This, however, was not queried within the survey.)

The implications of placing a value on both public use and non-use values is important for the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterways Initiative. Public input during the consultation clearly favours the establishment of natural greenways based on values of ecological integrity, environmental awareness, healthy recreational choices, and natural lifestyle choices. (L. Schneider Wood, Area E Consultation, 2006)

Factors that will Influence the Economic Benefit of Trails

Realization of enhanced economic benefit from a regional trail system is dependent on several factors. Review of existing literature, research and trail system studies suggest the following factors will increase the overall potential for the SH2H to have lasting economic benefit to the region:

- Experience driven tourism markets
- Authentic local ownership
- Capacity and commitment to promote into the destination travel market
- Unique natural features
- Compelling historical context and authentic local culture
- Aboriginal knowledge encounter
- Attractive Local commerce
- Community understanding and support for commercial tour operators & guides

- Measurable local business and job benefits directly from the trail system
- Attentiveness to safety and accessibility
- Consistent delivery of resources to match the message

Experience driven tourism markets

People are compelled to travel to and explore a destination not simply by the physical features of the location, but by the perceived ability to participate in the life, culture, stories and natural history of that destination and the overall experience they have while doing so.

According to the World Tourism Organization (News Bulletin, September 2002), “travellers want a complete, participatory, authentic experience which provides them with opportunities for new knowledge.” (as cited by Heritage Canada Foundation and Canadian Tourism Commission, 2004, p. 1) And the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC, 2001) observes that trends suggest, “Travel consumers worldwide are seeking experiential, life-enriching vacations that involve culture, nature, the outdoors and learning.” (as cited in A Guide for Tourism Business Entrepreneurs, 2006, p. 5)

Further CTC studies reveal growing demand for “travel that engages the senses, stimulates the mind, includes unique activities, and connects in personal ways with travelers on an emotional, physical, spiritual or intellectual level.” (Dr. N. Arsenault & T. Gale, 2004, p. i) In their 2004 study for the Canadian Tourism Commission, Arsenault and Gale (2004) suggest there is opportunity ahead for operators who build “holistic, themed travel journeys, rather than merely packaging a series of attractions and special events.” (p. i)

The recent shift in the Canadian Tourism Commission’s national destination marketing efforts reveal this understanding in their new “*Canada: Keep Exploring*” strategy. Considered a dramatic shift away from the traditional means of understanding the travel market needs (through demographics, age, income, location), the *Keep Exploring* strategy focuses on the types of real benefits a person is hoping to receive from a travel experience – note the focus on “experience.” (G. Danis, 2006)

For the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative the implication is that emphasis should be placed on the nature of the travel experiences that can be built around each of the trail routes – cultural and natural learning opportunities, special events, camaraderie through shared outdoor activities, European style hut-to-hut wilderness journeys, overnight pilgrimages, hosted spa and “soul space” retreats, outdoor day programs, wildlife discovery encounters, conservation service projects, artist’s field camps, bird watching treks, links with community celebrations and festivals, fun/fitness/friendship sessions, exhilaration adventures, and team programs. . .experiential explorations.

Authentic local ownership

The most prominent type of visitor experiences in demand were those that facilitated opportunities for visitors to reach into the host community, meet and socialize with local people, participate in community activities, and engage in cultural exchanges. Many of these experiences do not represent typical observational tourist activities; rather they involve hands-on participation in day-to-day community activities.

(N. Arsenault & T. Gale, 2004, p. 3)

The perceived value of a travel experience will increase with the degree of local authenticity by which it is built. This is an important and powerful concept. The more a local community takes ownership for, values, grows, and is involved in the experiences around which people gather the more powerful that same experience will be for others who join. It creates a kind of exponential law of attraction.

Prime examples of this include the international spotlight placed on the Mountain Biking community and trails of North Vancouver that grew out of a singular focus of passion for freewheel riding. Over time, the experimentation and purity of experience grown by local mountain bike riders has attracted what is now international attention. The name “North Shore” has become synonymous with the sport and an attraction to others wanting to experience something of both the legendary trail structure and the stories and community that surround it. Locally we might point to Salmon Arm’s annual Roots and Blues Festival or the Sorrento Bluegrass Workshops as a growing example in the Shuswap.

The implications for a regional hut, trail and waterway system for non-motorized natural travel encounters is that the local community must both know about the system, actively support it, and participate in its growth and evolution. The International Mountain Bike Association is a strong advocate of local ownership encouraging both community involvement in the building and maintenance of local trails, and the sharing of those trails with others. “Shared-use trails help build a trail community to support a common resource.” (IMBA, 2004, p. 45)

In addition, creating opportunities for visitors to meet, socialize and learn from local community members increases the value of the travel experience for guests to the region. “The general consensus was . . .that if visitors truly want authentic experiences, they need to get into the community and experience the ‘here and now’! All agreed authenticity was important.” (N. Arsenault & T. Gale, 2004, p. 5)

In the Shuswap, several examples of authentic nature-based community trail interest warrant acknowledgement for their potential to attract others:

- the Switzmalph Cultural Centre’s commitment to build links between First Nations and Non-First Nations People, including the creation of trails that foster this educational encounter between people and the land
- the Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of BC who’s commitment to restore and manage the Skimikin Lake Recreation Site as a destination centre for backcountry equestrian trail riding is now seeing an annual increase in use including successful provincial events;
- the Larch Hills Nordic Society’s management of the Larch Hills Cross Country Ski trails, boasting a passionate local membership base, a consistently friendly welcome to the provinces largest loppet attendance, and over 120 kilometres of trails;
- the local Salmon Arm mountain biking community’s quiet persistence at maintaining local trails, gathering for group rides, and sharing trail information. Notable here is the growing involvement of a much younger segment of the Shuswap population. Support and a willingness to help maintain existing trails and develop new ones is high amongst young people, giving the region’s mountain bike community a particularly grass roots and vital feel.

Community capacity and shared commitment to promote into the destination travel market

A recent economic impact analysis by Price Waterhouse Coopers for the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario (2004) points to the importance of marketing, promotion and attraction efforts in order to achieve significant economic impacts. (p. 3) It is not sufficient to assume construction or presence of a trail is enough to realize full economic benefit. A proactive and coordinated commitment to invite and welcome people is required – both locally and beyond the geographic boundaries of the Shuswap. The Ontario report continues by observing, “communities will need to work together to encourage the development of the infrastructure, businesses and services required by trail users.” (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2004, p.3)

Ultimately, integrated destination marketing efforts between the Shuswap Trail Alliance partners and municipal, regional and provincial destination marketing organizations will result in a more substantial and sound return on investment. Elements of this cooperative approach to marketing and promotion of a Shuswap Hut, Trail and Waterways system include ensuring a consistent look, feel and presentation of identity branding, logos, signage, print materials, information bulletins, and website.

Similarly, a strategic annual approach to marketing is required with involvement from all levels of the destination-marketing infrastructure. Ongoing enquiry into the motivation and needs of actual and potential trail users, service providers, and the wider ecological community is required, along with the resolve to evolve the trail system as a service in response to this information. This requires willingness by local and regional communities, businesses, governments and the public to both take the time to understand the complexities of the international destination travel industry, and to make a commitment to engage with it.

Furthermore, ongoing discussion with the Five Rings Trail Strategy (Adventure Okanagan Co-op, Bearfoot Canada) suggests an inter-regional link between the Shuswap trails and waterways and other regions throughout the Okanagan/Shuswap interior mountain trench would increase the impact of these efforts. This would demand additional resolve throughout the communities of the Shuswap watershed to recognize the benefits of inter-regional partnerships when engaging with the international destination travel market. The net results will help to leverage the true economic capacity a regional trail and waterways system can provide. It will also help to ensure the trail ways are well maintained and managed as a legacy for future generations. Together the sum of the whole is greater than even the best efforts of each of the individual parts.

Unique natural features

Trail corridors provide points of unique natural interest and aesthetic beauty, and guide people to experience ecological areas that are unique within the region. The Shuswap watershed region’s transitional forests, micro-climates, pocket meadows, metamorphic rock outcrops, fiord-like glacial sculpting, highland and basin contrasts, and dominant lake view vistas provide a compelling mix of potential points along the way. Only a few of these features, however, are easily accessible to the wider general public. (e.g. Adams River, Margaret Falls, Gorge Creek by Craigellachie.)

Anticipation is a significant motivator for trail use and tugs at the curiosity within us. Establishing an inventory of natural features that could anchor trail routes became a core consideration for the first 24 months of the SH2H development process. Field explorations and local interviews were complimented by direction from the regional

land resource management offices. (Meetings: IAMC, May 3, 2005; R. Routledge, May 19, 2005; LRMP, June 3, 2005; ILMB, Nov. 10, 2005; F. Thiessen, Jan. 18, 2006)

The identification and protection of these features is an important issue for the long-term viability of a regional trail network.

Compelling historical context and authentic local culture

Travel motivation studies reveal an important connection between outdoor, nature based experiences and local historic and cultural experiences.

Aboriginal knowledge encounter

Provincial studies consistently suggest opportunities to learn from aboriginal leadership are highly valued but are limited in many regions of the province. (Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC, 2005) The efforts of the Switzmalph Cultural Centre and the Little Shuswap Indian Band's Quaaout Lodge are well suited to leverage this market knowledge.

Attractive Local commerce

Local retail, especially in the arts and crafts sector, consistently top as the highest pick "other activity" attractive to outdoor recreation participants. In an activity motivation study of canoeists and kayakers (J. Rogers, 2003a) 69% of American respondents and 58% of Canadian respondents indicated a likelihood of shopping for arts, crafts and antiques on a trip. (p.7)

Community understanding and support for commercial tour operators & guides

A collective community readiness to receive tour operators into a region will leverage greater potential tourism benefits, overall visitor satisfaction and greater likelihood of long-term success. Conducting a clear assessment of tour operator expectations is necessary to ensure their needs can be met. These needs include both primary services related to a travel experience and support services within the wider community. (G.S. Henderson, 1993)

Measurable local business and job benefits

One measure of economic success within a regional trail system should be in direct support for local businesses and people. The ability of the SH2H initiative to create sustainable options for employment contributes to the health and resilience of both the local economy and the natural environment.

Safety and accessibility

Trails need to be accessible to be used. Travel to a designated trailhead needs to be achievable and consistent. Signage, maps and printed guides need to provide clear directions. Reasonable strategies to ensure traveller safety need to be considered, especially in the form of accurate information describing trail types, difficulty ratings and hazards. The Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen Society of BC discovered that when they clearly signed the surrounding Skimikin Lake trail system, confidence and use by riders increased significantly. Frequent feedback reflects the importance of good signs.

Consistent delivery of resources to match the message

There must be trails to match the claims of regional publicity. Publicized trails exist where they are said to exist. Well-designed tools are in place to guide people to and along the system (signage and guidebooks, maps, pamphlets). They are easy to find, easy to follow, and meet or exceed expectations based on prior description.

Leverage 2010 Olympics with a 2011+ strategy

The 2010 Winter Olympics to be held in British Columbia presents a unique opportunity for the communities of the province. For an intense period of time much of the world's focus will be directed toward the Nation and Province. This is seen as an important opportunity to promote the province to potential visitors. The Canadian Tourism Commission (Conference Board of Canada, 2006) anticipates tourism profits for the nation will reach all time highs of \$1.1 billion dollars in 2010.

Those communities that have prepared attraction strategies for 2011 and beyond will realize the potential of this opportunity. And these strategies must include attractive, market-ready experiences with the local infrastructure in place for travellers to buy into.

For an international market, this means having experiences for the international travel trade market-ready up to two years in advance of 2010. For the closer-to-home short haul market, travel products will need to be ready in the year prior to the 2010 Olympics, and viable into the next five to ten years. In both cases, travel products will need to continue to evolve according to market interest and be accompanied by an ongoing marketing strategy.

The Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative has set an ambitious four year development strategy targeting over 250 kilometres of trail and the first five day hut-to-hut travel experience ready for 2010. This will require a commitment of investment resources for the 2007 build season, development of an integrated marketing strategy, and the creation of market-ready travel experiences in place by 2009 in order to realize any advantage from the 2010 opportunity.

While an international audience is desirable, the primary target for 2010 should be the short haul market, with the international travel market targeted as a secondary audience in preparation for advanced development in the following five years.

At the same time, the 2010 Winter Olympics should be considered an added marketing opportunity, where priority is still placed on a comprehensive strategy that leverages maximum benefit from wider media interest, internet PR generation, direct targeting of niche user groups, association involvement (IMBA, BCHBC, Trails Canada), and support from regional/provincial destination marketing organizations.

Economic Potential by Proposed Route Area

Of the proposed trail routes, the following assessment of potential economic benefits have been identified:

Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route

- significant tourism potential, especially for new cultural, historic and ecological learning, cross-country mountain bike, and guided horse riding experiences – with a clear advantage for operators who partner with the Little Shuswap Indian Band.

- complimentary tourism benefit for existing and new accommodation and hospitality operators leveraging proximity of trails for promotional and image enhancement purposes;
- significant property value retention and enhancement;
- significant recreation and quality of life enhancement;
- and a secondary benefit of potential business attraction and retention, if considered desirable by the communities of the North Shuswap.
- significant value-added enhancement for new property development if intentionally leveraged;

It is worth noting, the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm and Associates, 2002) identifies the development of hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking opportunities; and links between outdoor recreation and heritage development and interpretation, as opportunities for the North Shuswap. (p. 27)

Anstey Highland Routes

- significant new tourism potential for backcountry highland hut-to-hut multi-day experiences (summer/fall)
- significant enhancement for existing tourism operators from front country trail based day use experiences (4 season)
- new tourism potential for backcountry lake based paddle hut-to-hut multi-day experiences (primarily during the spring and fall shoulder seasons due to lower motorized lake use at these times)
- expansion of tourism attraction primarily for smaller accommodation operators and guides with a client base interested in natural, outdoor, non-motorized experiences (especially into spring and fall shoulder seasons)
- proximity of trails for promotional and image enhancement purposes;
- significant property value retention and enhancement;
- significant recreation and quality of life enhancement;
- significant value-added enhancement for new property development as demonstrated by current developers within the District of Sicamous boundary (Interviews: Twin Anchors, Jan. 21, 2006; Crazy Creek, Jan. 21, 2006; Hyde Mountain, Jan 21, 2006; Bayview Estates, Feb. 11, 2006; Regal Resorts, Mar. 24, 2006)
- increased expenditures in local communities by trail users at key trailhead access points (Sicamous, Malakwa, Perry River)
- related job retention and creation

For the trails within the Anstey Highland (and lake level) route system, it should be noted that within the respondents to the Tourism Operators Interest Survey conducted as part of the Phase 1 consultation, 42% of the respondents identified Sicamous as being a priority for development. (G. Casselman, 2005, p. 22) Casselman

notes a potential bias in these results, however, due to 32% of the respondents in the survey's sample being from Sicamous.

It is the opinion of the author that the bias noted by Casselman (2005) may also be interpreted to support the recommendation that Sicamous be a priority for development within the proposed hut and trail system. Indeed, voluntary return of the distributed surveys would suggest readiness and belief in the value of the project by Sicamous and surrounding area operators. Success of the trail project economically, however, will depend on the readiness of local operators to engage the resource in their business planning, marketing, product development and operations.

Furthermore, the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm et al., 2002) identifies front and backcountry nature-based strengths and opportunities for the Sicamous/Area E region to include the growing community support for tourism development, good access to alpine and sub-alpine areas, potential for the creation of community trails, and potential for water based floating huts and boutique lodges. (p. 31)

The Inner Shuswap Trails

- increased (4 season) overnight visitor attraction – including “inn-to-inn” hiking, mountain biking and equestrian experience – for smaller local accommodation operators (partnership links between Sunnybrae, Herald Park, White Lake, Blind Bay, Sorrento operators)
- proximity of trails for promotional and image enhancement purposes;
- enhanced day use trail experience builds on hallmark recognition of Margaret Falls
- significant property value retention and enhancement; (White Lake and Blind Bay trails)
- significant recreation and quality of life enhancement (White Lake and Blind Bay trails)
- enhanced attraction of retirement, semi-retirement, and lifestyle professionals
- increased expenditures in local communities by trail users (Sorrento, Blind Bay, Tappen, Salmon Arm)
- generation of revenue and in-kind investment from trail and infrastructure use (Trailhead Destination Accommodators)

Of all the regional trail clusters identified in this study, the Inner Shuswap system is perhaps the most “market ready.” Between Sunnybrae/Herald Park, White Lake, and Blind Bay existing accommodation operators are appropriately placed at trailhead locations lending themselves to an Inn-to-Inn style overnight trail experience. Distances between each “trailhead cluster” (See 5 Rings Trail, D. Elzer, 2004) are approximately spaced at 6 to 10 kilometres apart. A variety of small accommodation options include camping, bed and breakfast, lodge/resort, and cabin rentals.

As well, Margaret Falls, Herald Park, White Lake and Blind Bay/Sorrento already hold a destination profile in the Shuswap. The regional district's Area E parks plan has obtained approvals of permission to create trails along both sides of Reinecker Creek and in the Blind Bay/White Lake area. And a strong group of supporting advocates in the area have already expressed desire to move the project forward.

The Skimikin Connector

- significant tourism and recreation potential, especially for independent and guided cross-country mountain bike and horse riding experiences
- increased (4 season) overnight visitor attraction – including “inn-to-inn” hiking, mountain biking and equestrian experience – for smaller local accommodation operators (partnership links between Salmon Arm, Tappen, Skimikin Valley, Turtle Valley, Squilax, Sorrento, and Chase)
- cultural and ecology learning experiences with the Switzmalph Cultural Centre and the Little Shuswap Indian Band/Quaaout Lodge. (Salmon Arm Bay to Squilax)
- enhanced overnight base-camp use of trails from Skimikin Forestry Recreation Site (equestrian, mountain bike) – with strong summer and fall potential, and winter dependant on good snow fall
- dedicated single site hut potential at Skimikin Lake (or along hill traverse trail overlooking Skimikin Lake) for educational opportunities (culture, ecology, health, physical recreation) and event opportunities – link with custodian
- proximity of trails for promotional and image enhancement purposes;
- unique “casket to keg” backcountry tour potential linking Northern Wineries in Skimikin Valley with Crannog Ales in Sorrento
- rural property value retention and enhancement;
- rural recreation and quality of life enhancement;
- some related job retention (Skimikin Rec Site Custodian)
- wetland ecology education/restoration program potential (Skimikin/Turtle Valley)
- new special events and enhancements to existing events (equestrian, mountain bike, orienteering)

Of particular note for the Skimikin Connector is the strong presence of the well-organized Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen Society of British Columbia who manage the Skimikin Forestry Recreation Site. Together with the CSRD nearly 100 kilometres of surrounding track has been converted to shared-use equestrian trails.

As part of this arrangement, the Skimikin Site has been operated under supervision of a site custodian. The Shuswap Chapter BCHSBC have developed a working model that appears to be working and may lend itself well to the maintenance and upkeep of other sites. The Larch Hills Nordic Society is exploring a similar possibility.

As well, the connection between Salmon Arm Bay and Squilax via Skimikin is an important traditional aboriginal route for the Shuswap people. While not necessarily following the original routes, the re-establishment of a connecting trail through the Skimikin Valley could be a substantial step toward revitalizing both the trail route itself and the story and inherent values of the Shuswap Nation’s relationship with the land. The Switzmalph Cultural Centre and Quaaout Lodge are well situated on either end of the route to act as start and end points for cultural, educational and environmental journeys and events.

The Larch Hills Traverse

- attraction of day and half-day hike, bike and equestrian use, with particular benefit to trailhead accommodation and related services
- expanded seasonal use of the Larch Hills Cross Country Ski area into spring, summer, fall destination mountain bike and equestrian use
- increased mountain bike attraction through dedicated free ride trails and “epic” cross-country traverse
- opportunity to craft trail related product specials (e.g. restaurant “ride” lunches, partnerships with events)
- enhanced winter recreational opportunities (ski touring and snowshoe), including “family friendly” hut-to-hut traverse experience (Larch Hills Chalet/Cec’s Cabin/and potential Mara Ridge Chalet)
- dedicated potential for educational program opportunities (culture, ecology, health, physical recreation) and event opportunities, including overnight cabin accommodation – linked with custodian based at main Larch Hills Chalet
- proximity of trails for promotional and image enhancement purposes (primarily winter Nordic trails, proposed community trailhead routes, Rubberhead and other mountain bike trails, Larch Hills Traverse “epic” ride)
- increased expenditures in local communities by trail users (Salmon Arm, Sicamous, Enderby)
- related job creation
- stability and increases in adjacent property values (trailhead accesses)
- attraction of new money to communities
- generation of revenue from trail and infrastructure use through Larch Hills Nordic honorary fee system
- tenure and tax revenues from operator use
- corporate/industry relocation and retention due to quality of life benefits (proximity of)
- new and enhanced special events (sporting, cultural and recreational)

While the aesthetic values of the Larch Hills Traverse and new Rubberhead Mountain Bike Trails are not significant enough to create a destination draw in themselves, economic benefit is leveraged in the enhancement of experiential opportunity due to a) the conceptual pathway linking of Salmon Arm and Sicamous, b) the well established non-motorized winter use of the Larch Hills, c) and the clear life style benefits to the largest population base in the region, and d) the educational potential the trail system can offer in close proximity and with easy access from the region’s schools.

The Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm, 2002) identifies both strengths and opportunities for the Larch Hills area in relationship to the strong Nordic Skiing program and the extensive mountain biking opportunities in the Canoe system of trails. (p. 30) Interestingly, none of the existing mountain bike trails is designated within the provincial land record except, it would seem the now closed Rubberhead route from South

Canoe north. The Shuswap Trail Alliance received approval from the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts Recreational Sites and Trails Office for the North Canoe Rubberhead trail system in June 2006.

Salmon Arm Bay

- Major social, cultural, ecological, and public safety benefits complement economic benefits for the Shuswap First Nations
- major value added amenity for existing accommodation operators, increased potential for shoulder season multi-overnight stays – particularly related to spring bird migration and fall cultural field education program opportunities
- proximity of trails for promotional and image enhancement purposes;
- major educational opportunity (culture, ecology, health, physical recreation) and event opportunities, including overnight accommodation with existing accommodation operators (Switzmalph Cultural Centre, Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society, Okanagan College, School District #83)
- full spectrum demographic attraction (including families)
- increased expenditures in local communities by trail users
- new business expansion and start-up opportunities
- related job creation
- corporate/industry relocation and retention due to quality of life benefits (proximity of)
- stability and increases in adjacent property values
- attraction of new money to communities
- enhanced attraction of retirement, semi-retirement, and lifestyle professionals
- tenure and tax revenues from operator use agreements
- generation of revenue from trail and infrastructure use
- new and enhanced cultural and environmental events
- public/government cost reductions (environmental and pollution control, infrastructure costs such as storm sewage and water management, health care, and safety)

Combined with the Salmon Arm Greenway trail system and the existing Raven Trail in west Salmon Arm Bay – the proposed West Bay Trail has the potential of meeting and exceeding both intrinsic values (ecological, educational, cultural, health and wellness) and economic, especially for the local residents of the Adams Lake Indian Band and Neskonlith Indian Band.

Despite the significant costs related with this trail, the cost benefit analysis tips in favour of support when the intrinsic values of the trail are included. The original proposal and study commissioned by the Adams Lake Indian Band (C. Nash, 2003) names the stark fact that no walking path exists between the communities west of Salmon

Arm, leaving the highway and the railway as the two access corridors. The number of deaths along the rail tracks alone was named as cost benefit enough to warrant the expense of moving this trail route forward.

The Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm, 2002) names the Mary Thomas Centre, agri-tourism, bird watching and mountain biking all as opportunities for the Salmon Arm area. (p. 30)

Furthermore, the Salmon Arm Accommodation Association has proposed a new hotel tax and dedicated 20% of the revenue to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance initiative. Of particular interest are trails accessible to small accommodation operators within the City boundary. Support for an extended trail way engaging people more closely with both the lake and cultural ecology of the west bay would be a welcome asset.

The Shuswap Water Trail

- opportunity to build major point-to-point multi day outdoor paddle experience, including integration with existing river and lake side accommodations, bed and breakfast operations, cabin rentals, and huts
- return destination visit potential – in order to complete the full route
- Class I and II river sections allow for new and learning paddlers,
- potential mixed agri-tourism experience where proximity to farms and rural communities provides easy access from river (Upper Shuswap River from Ashton Creek to Sicamous)
- increased opportunity for guided river trips increase safety, direct appropriate ecological impacts, and enhance travel experience
- proximity of water trail for promotional and image enhancement purposes;
- increased educational opportunities (culture, ecology, health, physical recreation), including overnight accommodation with existing operators (e.g. Kingfisher Environmental Interpretive Centre, MacKenzie Camp)
- related job creation
- increased expenditures in local communities by water trail users (Resiwig to Sicamous) – including “farm fresh” products
- new business expansion and start-up opportunities – particularly for service related
- attraction of new money to communities
- enhanced tourism and recreation business opportunities
- tenure and tax revenues from operator use
- public/government cost reductions (environmental and pollution control)
- new special events and enhancements to existing events (sporting, cultural and recreational)

The above provides a preliminary starting point for considering the economic benefits that might grow out of the ecological and social/cultural benefits inherent within a water trail designated for non-motorized travel. As such,

the extent of the proposed Shuswap Water Trail is significant and warrants further consideration not included within the scope of this report.

The advantages which were identified, however, would suggest the Shuswap Water Trail concept holds considerable potential and should be given full priority where resources and human resource capacity are available.

In many ways, the exercise of creating a water trail is more one of communicating a concept. The trail infrastructure already exists in the form of the waterway. Infrastructure requirements are necessary where accommodation does not exist or designated pullouts have not already been established. In these situations intensive use sites must be identified and created for camping or Hut facilities.

Recommendations based on the review of potential economic benefits

It is recommended that:

- **Move forward with trail route exploration and implementation:** Based on the reviewed literature, tourism operator survey, and public feedback, it is reasonable to suggest that where establishing well designed, signed and maintained trails for non-motorized recreational travel can be done with limited negative economic impacts to existing stakeholders, the benefits warrant moving forward from an economic point of view. Environmental and social stakeholder consultation and assessments will still be required.
- **First priority should be given to those routes with clear economic, environmental, and social advantage,** as suggested by the opportunity summaries, as well as the necessary stakeholder support.
- **Where trail development has a high economic potential but is perceived to have an unmanageable impact on existing economic stakeholders like forest harvest licensees, trappers or existing tourism operators, further consideration of economic benefit and trade off will be needed.** It is recommended these areas proceed with an advanced economic impact audit. Timeliness should be of utmost concern, however. The window for leveraging the competitive advantage of building an amenity-based economic attractor within the Shuswap is quickly closing as rural communities throughout the province seek new opportunities for economic diversification.
- **Conduct detailed economic cost/benefit analysis if required.** In a major review, the US Department of the Interior National Park Service presents a compelling framework for understanding the potential economic impacts of river, trail and greenway projects. (NPS, 1995) This is a recommended resource in guiding further analysis of economic impact in relationship to specific route proposals.
- **The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterways Initiative, in order to realize maximum potential, requires a comprehensive destination marketing program orchestrated in partnership with regional and municipal organizations** with responsibilities for destination marketing functions (including the CSRD Tourism Office, the regional Chambers of Commerce, the regional Visitor Information Centres, and the municipal offices.)

- **Build a coordinated destination marketing program into provincial and national strategies through the regional and provincial tourism associations** (Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Tourism BC, COTA, the Adventure Okanagan Cooperative, the Okanagan Cultural Corridor, the Wilderness Tourism Association, the Backcountry Lodge Association), and provincial and federal government destination marketing initiatives (including the Provincial Ministry of Tourism Sport and the Arts, the Canadian Tourism Commission.)

Section Five: Sustainable Design

“The job of recreational engineering is not one of building trail into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the yet unloving human mind.” – Aldo Leopold

According to Demrow and Salisbury (1998) the primary purpose of a trail is not just to link to somewhere else but to engage in the natural environment through the experience of travel, and to protect that same natural environment from damage through use. (p. 13) Great trail design can actually facilitate a deepened awareness of the natural world in which we move. It can physically draw attention to the things around us, slow us down to become more aware, focus us. Great trail design can also take advantage of the landscape to minimize erosion, appropriately direct water flow, and mitigate expensive ongoing maintenance repairs. Simply put: good trail design puts us in touch with nature, inspires repeated use and care of the trail, ensures the trail lasts for a good long time, and reduces damage and costly repairs.

Well designed; Well Signed; Well Maintained

“The layout of paths will seem right and comfortable only when it is compatible with the process of walking. And the process of walking is far more subtle than one might imagine.”

(C. Alexander, 1977, p. 586)

Research into existing trails systems around the world has presented a wealth of best practices in trail design.

Central to all successful trail systems was a commitment to integrating great trail design, a solid communications strategy including signage, and the establishment of a sustainable ongoing maintenance program.

Long term monitoring of use and impact patterns show trails that are well designed, signed and maintained for non-motorized use can:

- attract and inspire good trail users,
- displace poor trail users,
- focus attention on the surrounding natural environment,
- encourage ecological awareness,
- actually slow travel speeds including those of down hill cyclists,
- contribute to overall community lifestyle values,
- enhance nearby property values,
- curb erosion,
- reduce costly maintenance,
- and inspire increased overall use of trails resulting in a net reduction of motorized dependence

Primary Reference Manuals

Foundational to the Shuswap Hut and Trail initiative is a driving goal to adopt the best in contemporary trail design and building techniques. A secondary review of existing resources, interviews with regional land managers, and exploration into best practices of other trail development organizations reveals a rich wealth of excellent design and planning materials. The attached reference list documents some of those resources.

Several resources have provided particularly important guidance (Natural Trail Design, 2005; IMBA, 2005; NSTF, 2002; Bruce Trail, 2001) along with the support and direction of Fred Thiessen and Ken Gibson of the Provincial Recreational Sites and Trails Office (MTSA), Steve Carr (ILMB), Ron Routledge (MoE), Dean McKinley (ILMB), Brenda Hartely (ILMB), Dave Bacon (ILMB), Kevin Dickenson (ILMB), and Terry MacDonald (Ok/S LRMP).

Along with printed standards outlined through the Provincial Recreational Sites and Trails Offices, several key resources have come to the top of the pile both on direction of our regional land management office and through clearly outstanding relevance to our objectives. The three primary planning, design and construction manuals driving standards for this project include:

- **The Whistler Trail Standards** (A. DeBoer, 2003) – developed by the Resort Municipality of Whistler the environmental and technical trail feature standards outlined have become a key reference for provincial recreational site and trail offices throughout the Province. Under the direction of our regional Recreational Sites and Trails Manager (K. Gibson, correspondence, June 5, 2006) the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance has adopted these standards as the base reference for trail planning.
- **General Standards for Trail Construction and Rehabilitation** (MoF, n.d.) – These form the basis for Provincial trail standards for construction on crown land within the Province of British Columbia. The Provincial Recreational Sites and Trails Office uses them in conjunction with the Whistler Trail Standards as the base set of parameters. (K. Gibson, correspondence, June 5, 2006)
- **The International Mountain Bicycling Association’s Trail Solutions: IMBA’s Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack** (P. Webber, V. Felton, M. Schmidt, E. Train and A. Lee, 2004) – the single most used manual in the Shuswap Trail Alliance’s design library. Most of the Whistler Standards currently being adopted as interim best practices by the Provincial Recreational Sites and Trails Offices for trail design and construction are based on IMBA’s research and huge experience.
- **Natural Surface Trails by Design** (T. S. Parker, 2004) – The International Mountain Bicycling Association promote Troy Parker’s remarkable text on understanding excellent natural trail design with their Sweet Singletrack guide. Together, these two resources form the backbone of the “well designed, signed, maintained” philosophy of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance.

In addition, the following resources are providing additional planning, design, and construction guidelines:

- The Bruce Trail
- The Nova Scotia Trail Manual
- Student Conservation Sustainable Trail Guide

- The Appalachian Mountain Club's Complete Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance

Web based resources are an important source of valuable information. Again, the attached reference list documents these sites. However, several deserve acknowledgement here for their immense value as up to date and relevant trail resource libraries:

- Trails Canada
- American Trails
- TrailsBC
- IMBA

Trail Designation Standards

Trail Classification by Intended Nature of Experience

(Nova Scotia Trails Federation, 2002)

Primitive, etc.

Trail Categories by Designated Use

(Nova Scotia Trails Federation, 2002)

Hiking

Bicycling

Equestrian

Trail Type by Construction Parameters

(Whistler Standards, 2003)

Type 1 etc.

Core Trail Design Standards

Contemporary trail design principles include the use of natural trail shapes, gateways, anchors and edges, rolling contours and out slopes.

- single track, natural surface
- natural shape
- contour reversals
- outslope
- anchors, gateways and edges

Trailheads

Trailhead locations are a critical consideration of a well-designed trail system. They provide the tangible entry point into the system. Trailheads must provide both inspiration and function in their overall design. Both the communication system (signage, maps, guides) and constructed amenities must direct appropriate use, educate users to the values and ethics of the trail, and inspire use of the trail.

In the recent Tourism Operators Interest Survey conducted for the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative, respondents suggested trailheads should be:

- accessible
- cost effective
- numerous
- regular
- have the least environmental impact
- piggyback onto currently developed infrastructure where possible
- provide parking
- bear-proof garbage facilities
- washrooms
- and information kiosks

(G. Casselman, 2005, p. 22)

Research also shows that a well-designed trailhead is a critical tool in mitigating unwanted behaviour. To this end, the British Columbia provincial guide to Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas (Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, 2002, 2005) recommends “trailheads should be well marked and located away from sensitive areas [residences, farm buildings, crops, yards]. . . and should provide:

- proper parking facilities for trail users
- trail use information (e.g. route and distance maps, trail users allowed on trail, code of conduct)
- amenities (e.g. garbage receptacles, toilet facilities, potable water supply, doggie bags)”

(p. 35)

Two Types of Trail Head

Within the Shuswap Hut and Trail system, two types of trailhead sites are proposed.

The first would be considered a *primary access point*, potentially linked in with existing accommodation operators. Here, trailhead facilities would anticipate higher day trip and shuttle trip parking needs, including detailed signage, interpretive information, washroom facilities, and bear proof garbage containers. A number of these sites would be designated as equestrian staging areas, and would also lend themselves to special event gatherings. Where

possible, these sites should integrate with existing sites. (e.g. Balmoral Road Trailhead to Blind Bay trails, Larch Hills Nordic parking lot, South Canoe trailhead area, Sicamous Chamber of Commerce & Wharf parking area, Salmon Arm Wharf parking area, Skimikin Lake Recreation Site)

Secondary access points would include locations where trails intersect with road access, but would not be intentionally promoted as starting points. Local residents, maintenance crews, trail users shortening a trip, and search and rescue personnel would most likely use these locations. Facilities at these access points would be minimal, with signage clearly indicating garbage must be self-removed, no washroom facilities, basic trailhead signage, and parking pullout for no more than 4 to 6 vehicles. (see NSTF, 2002, 3.13.1) Within the proposed SH2H routes, the majority of these access points would be on Forest Service Roads managed within crown land.

In all cases, where trailhead access points interface with nearby residences, appropriate parameters for design should include those discussed in the section on *Strategies to Maximize Landowner Benefits*. These include:

- trail placement away from immediate fence lines
- attractive fencing and use of natural visual buffer zones,
- clear signage and interpretive information,
- sensitively placed toilet and garbage facilities,
- limits to vehicle traffic and use of trailhead filters to physically impede motorized access,
- adequate parking at trailheads,
- on going maintenance strategies,
- incorporation of trail patrols to educate and enforce trail rules
- contracts for liability coverage
- and proactive community involvement.

Standardized Signage

- Trailhead
- Route Marker
- Trail blaze

Huts: Natural Design and Materials

We believe that every community, regardless of its particular faith, regardless of whether it even has a faith in any organized sense, needs some place where this feeling of slow, progressive access through gates to a holy center may be experienced. When such a place exists in a community, even if it is not associated with any particular religion, we believe that the feeling of holiness, in some form or other, will gradually come to life there among the people who share in the experience.

(C. Alexander, A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction, 1977, p. 334)

Because the huts must attract use in order to both be viable economically and to foster interaction and relationship within the natural landscape, they need to be marked as places of particular aesthetic beauty – simple, inviting, welcome retreat spaces that build a sense of belonging, ownership, camaraderie and shared responsibility.

While part of the function of a hut is to direct and minimize human impact within the landscape, drawing attentiveness to the environment beyond the cabin is desirable. To this end, the liberal use of windows are encouraged in the overall design, both to utilize natural lighting and to draw guests attention out to the natural surroundings. The hut design itself is intended to facilitate the educational process of wonder and relationship within the natural environment.

In both design types, appropriate natural materials are desirable in order to integrate within the natural surroundings. However, where a particular construction material is known to provide long term maintenance free value, is environmentally sound both to produce and place within the natural ecology of an area, reduces potential harm for wildlife, and creates a minimal visual impact it should be considered.

Research has suggested the use of glued woods is undesirable due to their attraction to animals. This includes the use of pressed fibreboard and plywood. Similarly, the use and choices of stains, paints and lacquers must be carefully considered.

Where possible, the use of alternate building techniques and materials might be considered – straw bale, split cord, stone – as an opportunity to promote ecologically sound building techniques. Similarly, the proactive salvage and use of recycled and discarded timbers should be explored and encouraged.

Hut Design: Two Styles/Four Options

Two hut styles are envisioned within the different Shuswap routes, each intended to address a different set of values.

Rustic Huts refer to a smaller, yet still comfortable and attractive cabin, suitable for sleeping 8 to 12 people. Simple design balances dedicated areas for warm and cozy living space to socialize, wait out inclement weather, and read focused around a high efficiency wood fire stove and the utilization of significant natural light; integrated bench/storage seating around one corner of the outer wall with a long table and additional chairs; a clearly defined kitchen area utilizing metal countertops with room for several stoves, rodent proof food storage cupboards, and a clear system for appropriate washing and storage of utensils; and finally, a sleeping loft with low maintenance covered foam mattresses.

The smaller rustic hut is intended for self-catered, public use, especially in terrain where lower human intrusion is desired. The rustic hut requires advance booking and so concentrates and limits daily use within an area.

In some cases, the use a smaller rustic hut might precede development of a larger destination hut, and later used as a separate host/custodian quarters – or – if applicable, be moved to a new location.

Destination Huts refer to an expanded design intended for 14 to 20 guests, with possible additional capacity for educational programs and retreats. as well as higher end bed and breakfast style and fully catered wilderness

encounter experiences. Within these structures would be a combination of dorm style sleeping lofts along with three or four bunks in smaller private retreat rooms.

In interviewing the Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association (J. Ayotte, 2005) we discovered a common vision in the desire to create opportunities for intentional space for environmental encounter and outdoor education. The AMWHA vision is purposeful: (AMWHA, retrieved March 31, 2006) "Huts will be places of respite from the elements where people will meet and enjoy each other's company. Their design and operations will foster camaraderie. They will be built with a style that balances cost effectiveness and aesthetics. They will be beautiful, 'blend' with their surroundings, and be 'Alaskan' in character." (p.1)

Overall design of huts within a Shuswap system would be based on similar qualities of simple, comfortable, and attractive living space designed to enhance social interaction, provide shelter, and promote environmental awareness. It is envisioned Destination Huts would have increased space for personal reflection and contemplation.

Again, design would incorporate a central focus of gathering around a high efficiency wood fire stove, utilization of natural light, integrated bench/storage seating around the common area perimeter, and bench style tables for eating, gathering, and educational programming. The Kitchen area would be in a separate room off of the main common area, with expanded counter area, built in sump drainage, and capacity to accommodate fully catered functions. Sleeping lofts would utilize higher wall profiles and bunks to accommodate additional bed space, again with low maintenance foam mattresses.

Alternate Structures It is anticipated that the use of alternate cabin-style structures may be utilized during the initial period of site assessment and development. These include canvas tent-cabins and Yurts. Each provides a flexibility to test a sites initial capacity and suitability within a linked system. A suggested objective has been suggested that three Yurts be obtained for this purpose. Once a more permanent structure (note next section) has been established, the Yurts can be moved to a new site – or – utilized to provide additional sleeping and meeting space for educational and retreat programs in concert with a Destination Hut site.

Trailhead Accommodations A fourth style of accommodation within the trail and waterway system is that of existing trailhead accommodations. These include existing lodges, resorts, bed and breakfasts, hotels and campgrounds near trailhead access points along routes. In some cases, an entire community might be viewed as an accommodation centre along a route. (For a more in-depth discussion of Trailhead accommodations, see the report section on Trailhead Destination Operators.)

Adaptive Management and Design Portability

Portability is desired within the overall design of both Rustic and Destination Huts. Where possible, the ability to dismantle and move a hut – particularly the smaller rustic huts – is intended to respond to adaptive management objectives. Under the adaptive management principles proposed for the hut and trail system, constant monitoring of environmental habitat impacts will result in necessary adaptations. In some cases, it may be determined over a 2 to 5 year period that a hut location is unsustainable within set habitat objectives. In this case the hut would be moved.

A hut design based on an expandable footprint is envisioned, where a standard base structure (the foundation of the rustic hut) can be added to on either side to extend it's overall capacity. Wayne Truax (Elements Design, 2005) has proposed a system where each hut section would stand on an independent adjustable base – possibly made of aluminium tubing – to aid in flexibility and transport weights. This warrants further consideration.

A Question of Adaptable Amenities

Both hut styles are intended to carry basic amenities to allow a party to travel to the facility and sleep overnight without having to carry a full kitchen and portable bed (pots and foam rests.) Huts would offer pots, pans, wood cutting materials, cleaning supplies, and low maintenance covered mattresses.

Huts would also be designed in a way to be equipped with increased amenities including fuel, stoves, bedding, and catered meals allowing for adaptation of the facilities appropriate to the intended user groups.

Huts would also be adaptable for educational programming use, including capacity to store the educational equipment and resources.

Lighting

Initially, it is anticipated the first rustic huts would require guests to bring white gas for gas mantel lanterns.

However, the hut would be designed to anticipate the incorporation of new solar charged electric cells and low energy light emitting sources. Use of natural lighting is also an important design consideration in both the building structure (i.e. plenty of South facing windows), and location (i.e. access to sunlight.)

Washroom Facilities

The first step is a primitive outhouse during the start-up phase of a hut. However, prior to use overwhelming the natural capacity to absorb concentrated human wastes, a second step is envisioned to install composting toilet systems. While the use of a heli-lift barrel system is an option, the use of motorized transport to manage waste is seen as a less than desirable impact.

Hut Placement and Natural Viewscape Integrity

It is a goal of the SH2H initiative that physical structures blend into the natural surroundings, and favour minimal intrusion into the overall integrity of the natural viewscape.

In areas of particular aesthetic natural value – especially where human impact is negligible or non-existent – the initiative would seek to either a) avoid constructing in the area completely, or b) where the location makes the best sense from both a travel/distance and educational/ecological opportunity, then a cabin would be placed in a visually sheltered location.

Direct sunlight is an important consideration in placement, however. The Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association has identified unobtrusive building design as a common goal, but note the importance of having access to sunlight means they cannot hide them completely. (J. Ayotte, 2005, p. 14)

Dedicated huts are intended, to be accessible from a side trail to the main trail and inaccessible to motorized access. A distance of at least two kilometres from road access is desired to minimize unwanted access, vandalism and environmental damage.

Section Six: Proposed Trail Routes

Overview of Proposed Routes

Over the course of the consultation period proposed trail routing has evolved. The initial presentation maps were designed to invite conversation and feedback. They were “what if” catalysts to stimulate and guide discussion based on a preliminary review of local knowledge and topography.

Early on in the feedback process several route areas were elevated as having higher interest, potential and value both for local use and as destination routes. Other areas were deemed lower potential due to less favourable values or obstacles, issues of cultural sensitivity, recreational incompatibility with other user groups, or for their particularly extreme or delicate natural landscape. These included extended routes in the Gold Range north of Eagle Pass Mountain, the northern aspects of Squilax Mountain, and forest trails within the Fly Hills area managed by the Snowblazers Snowmobile Club.

The Great Shuswap Trail Circuit: Six Identified Route Clusters and One Water Trail

Through the consultation and field explorations six sub-regional route clusters emerged around which further development and planning strategy can be formed. Central to each cluster is a dominant through trail providing the core artery for that area and link into the 280 + kilometre Great Shuswap Trail Circuit concept. (See Map #??.) For the purposes of identity and discussion, the sub-regional trail clusters are named after these dominant through routes as follow:

- Route 1: The Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route
- Route 2: The Anstey Highland Route
- Route 3: The Inner Shuswap Trail Route
- Route 4: The Larch Hills Traverse
- Route 5: The Skimikin Connection
- Route 6: The Salmon Arm Bay
- Route 7: The Shuswap Water Trail – In addition to the six sub-regional trail clusters, a seventh “water trail” system was identified as having significant environmental, recreational, and tourism value. The “Shuswap Water Trail” conceives a coordinated effort of community partners along a 160 + kilometre route following the flow of the Shuswap River from Lumby north to Mabel Lake, Mara Lake and the Anstey Arm to Hunakwa Lake.

A summary of each route cluster is provided later in this report with revised mapping of potential, proposed and existing trails, and an accompanying analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The Gordon Dale Memorial Trail and the 5 Rings Trail Strategy: Our Link with the Okanagan

A seventh cluster of trail connections has been identified linking a regional system in the Shuswap with the North Okanagan and the wider 5 Rings Trail vision. The Gordon Dale Memorial Trail Society, based out of Enderby is

championing development of a trail that will span a 70+ kilometre route from the Enderby Cliffs through the Hunter's Range and Mara Lookout culminating at Three Valley Gap via Wap Lake. Preliminary route plotting and mapping has been done for this trail route.

Two key trail connections between the Gordon Dale trail and proposed Shuswap Trail system are important:

- An Extended Owls Head Connection linking Sicamous with Mara Mountain
- A Three Valley Gap/Wap Lake link with the Joss Mountain Trail

The second link with the existing Joss Mountain Trail establishes a clear route connection with the proposed 5 Rings Trail Strategy.

Defining the Point-to-Point Overnight Concept

Within the 2002 Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Study several areas in the Shuswap region held medium to high potential for a cabin-to-cabin style backcountry travel experience. (See Appendix #?#)

reference Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy and Alaska Hut System + Sustainable hut design later in report

- Trailhead Accommodators – B&B, resorts, campgrounds, hotels
- Backcountry Lodges
- Backcountry Cabins (or “Huts”)
- Designated camping areas

Route 1: Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route

Map

Overview

IMPORTANT NOTE: The North Shuswap trail route proposal is still very much a “what if” concept. Further stakeholder consultation is still required to determine route location viability and community support.

The proposed Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route spans the North Shuswap from Squilax in the South West, to Seymour Arm and the Seymour River in the North East. It boasts some of the strongest values – culturally, historically, ecologically, aesthetically, and naturally – in the entire Shuswap watershed region.

Walking and riding through the extensive Crowfoot, Moberly and Fowler (or Grizzly) Meadows is one of the regions classic pleasures. A recent study commissioned by the Little Shuswap Indian Band reveals layers of history traversing these meadows, the shoreline of Shuswap Lake, and the valley passages up Scotch Creek. Following their aboriginal guides, surveyors, gold seekers, foresters and shephards have all claimed a layer of history on these trails. It is within these routes that the Little Shuswap Indian Band identified significant areas of interest related to traditional aboriginal trails. According to their research (Running Horse Consulting, 2001) the ethnographic and historic values of trails in the region are so rich they warrant consideration for historic designation.

The report notes that in 1974, Parks Canada conducted a trail reconnaissance of the old Big Bend gold rush route to determine whether historic or recreational significance warranted consideration. According to the LSIB study (Running Horse Consulting, 2001), the results of the Parks Canada survey recommended sections of the trail be given reserve status. None of these recommendations were initiated, however, Running Horse Consulting (2001) recommends, "Little Shuswap Indian Band liaises with BC Parks to establish a preliminary plan for the final protection of this trail." (p. 94)

The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative acknowledges the significant values inherent in a North Shuswap trail route, and looks to the Little Shuswap Indian Band for lead direction on trail location and in setting objectives for future trail use in the North Shuswap. To this end, Andreas Artz with the Little Shuswap Indian Band's Aboriginal Interests Department has acted as an advising contributor to the initial consultation phase of the initiative. The Shuswap Trail Alliance, together with the CSRD Area F Parks Committee and other supporting stakeholder organizations, are well positioned to partner with the Little Shuswap Indian Band in this regard.

The proposed route follows much of this traditional path, at one time part of the Big Bend Gold Rush Trail north to Seymour Arm (then called Ogden City.) Lining up with the CSRD Area F Parks Plan (R. Beardmore & O. Dodd, 2005) proposal to establish a grand circuit trail wrapping the shore line from Squilax to Seymour Arm, a second route is possible making a detour north at Celista climbing up into the Crowfoot/Moberly meadows, then crossing to Fowler (Grizzly) Mountain, before navigating the ridgeline back down to the Grand Squilax Seymour Trail at Albas Falls Provincial Park. From here it has been proposed the trail would continue north along the lake to Seymour Arm Provincial Park. From Seymour Arm, route considerations favour working out a path with the local community north along Seymour River connecting with the Ratchford-Pettipiece region, but further consultation and fieldwork is needed.

The following outline is built on initial consultation input, preliminary field sessions, and most notably, input from the Little Shuswap Indian Band's Aboriginal Interests Department (A. Artz, interviews, 2005) as well as the Columbia Shuswap Regional District's Area F Parks Plan (R. Beardmore and O. Dodd, 2005).

Preliminary feedback on the proposed route was also provided during presentations hosted by the North Shuswap Chamber of Commerce (Oct. 24, 2005), a community meeting hosted at Crowfoot Inn, Celista (Jan. 20, 2006), and the North Shuswap Naturalists (Feb. 16, 2006). As well, meetings and interviews with several community leaders was conducted, including Denise Delisle (CSRD Area F Director), Jay Boppre (Crowfoot Snowmobile Club), Joan Bristow (Area F Parks Commission), Jim Cooperman (Area F Parks Commission, Shuswap Environmental Action Society), Nicholas Mitra (Adventure Shuswap), John Rivette and Ron Wiens (Seymour Arm), and Jean Day (North Shuswap Chamber of Commerce.)

Further community consultation is now required in the North Shuswap to further refine the shape of the proposed route and side trails, determine community support, and coordinate with the current CSRD Area F Parks plan. An intentional process is recommended in order to gather feedback from the communities between Squilax and Seymour Arm.

Applicable trail use, type and objectives

The proposed trail route (overall) would be designated as primitive backcountry (NSTF, 2005) Type III/IV (Whistler Standards, 2003) un-surfaced single-track tread (30 – 50 cm width tread, brush clearance width to 1 m, height clearance to 2.4m according to Whistler Standards and Ministry of Forests guidelines, average grade objective at less than 10%, maximum grade sections within 15 – 20%, 5% tread out slope on climbing trail, with regular use of grade reversals throughout design for maximum water drainage according to IMBA Principals of Sustainable Trails) for mixed non-motorized use: hiking, cross-country mountain biking, snowshoeing, x-country ski touring and equestrian.

However, significant sections throughout the North Shuswap route concept will require specialized management plans and objectives. In particular: The proposed link between Quaooout Lodge and Roderick-Haig Brown Provincial Park must operate within set guidelines of BC Parks and the Little Shuswap Indian Band. Similarly, sections that connect with Albas Provincial Park and Seymour Arm Provincial Park will also require individual plans determined with BC Parks and the B.C Ministry of Environment.

The Crowfoot/Mobley/Fowler route section falls within the Crowfoot Snowmobile Club's recreational tenure, and is offered as a "what if" query to see where the best alignment of a non-motorized hiking trail might be placed within the overall motorized recreational zoning. Preliminary thoughts were discussed with the president of the Crowfoot Snowmobile Club. (J. Bopre, January 2006) Follow-up discussions will need to consider whether identifying a single track non-motorized route to the edge of the existing motorized recreational zone is feasible. Certainly, multiple use of the existing road track seems welcomed by the club, with mountain bikers, hikers, horses, 4x4 vehicles and off-road vehicles and motorcycles sharing both the old Sheep Trail to the Crowfoot Meadows and the existing Forest Service Road.

Establishment of an extended trail way system in the North Shuswap requires close cooperation within the new Area F Parks Plan. Linear corridors within the plan designate regional trails that "recognize high priority values for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, skiing, and other outdoor activities." (R. Beardmore & O. Dodd, 2005) Proposed trails within the Area F Parks Plan that provide important links within the Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Trail concept include: Chocolate Lily Trail, Lee Creek; Lee Creek Bluffs; Scotch Creek/Blueberry Creek Trail; and Scotch Creek Valley Trail. (p. 20) Cooperative planning will continue with the CSRD Parks Planning Office, as well as direction and consultation with the Area F Parks Commission.

The recommendation that the extended Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Trail Route be designated non-motorized is consistent with trail objectives presented in the CSRD Area F Parks Plan (R. Beardmore & O. Dodd, 2005). This report recommends similar designation based on public consultation and the observation that "there is a lot of informal ATV use of forestry roads and trail in Area F and since the supply and access to these roads and trails is abundant, there appears to be little need to designate "motorized" trails at this point in time." (p. 19) The report qualifies this, however, by noting that designation of motorized recreational trails within the CSRD Area F Parks plan could certainly be added in the future if the demand was there.

Proposed signage would remain consistent with overall Shuswap Trail Alliance standards, but need to be integrated into existing trail Management standards where trailheads start within other jurisdictions. (e.g. BC Parks, the CSRD Parks, and Crowfoot Snowmobile Club.) Negotiation would include consistent signing of key

junctions (4x4 post and standard route plate with direction arrow) and blaze marked for clear navigation using standard square metal blaze tags attached to trees.

Proposed Route Description and Features Inventory

Distances approx.	Description
A	Squilax/Little Shuswap Indian Band/Quaaout Lodge
0 – 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailhead: Squilax/Little Shuswap Indian Band and Quaaout Resort and Conference Centre create the natural starting point for the Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route, revitalizing traditional aboriginal trails throughout the North Shuswap. As a trailhead destination, LSIB sets both the ethic and educational tone of the trail experience. As well, opportunity for interpretive and guided trail programs is developed. Together with Kamloops Bike Camps, Little Shuswap Indian Band has developed a network of mountain bike trails. (M. Scott, November 2006) Appropriate trail alignment will need to be considered within this network.
A	Adams River
1 – 1.5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At approx. 1 km the proposed trail leaves Herald Provincial Park at it's Northwest corner, top of the established trail just before the footbridge crossing of Reinecker Creek loops back down to the road. Here the trail continues north along the east side of Reinecker Creek. This is the beginning of the planned CSRD Area C Reinecker Creek Trail (east side route) for which Provincial approval has been granted. It follows an old (largely overgrown and eroded) trail. at approx. 1.5 km is a small waterfall through a narrow rock canyon. The old trail ascends along the east side of the falls. Shortly after this point the trail leaves the creek and ascends the hillside. (Look for old step remnants dug into the hillside.)

Key Challenges and Potential

Major portions of this proposed route pass through landscape under the jurisdiction and management of key interest groups, including Adams Lake Indian Band, Little Shuswap Indian Band, Private Land Owners, Forest Companies, Trappers, and the local Snowmobile Clubs. This proposal assumes a position of looking to these groups for guidance in finding an appropriate route for non-motorized travelers to make their way north to the Gold. A willingness to work cooperatively will be key to the route's success.

Costs: Development, Construction, Operation

copy

SWOT Summary Table

Social, Environmental, Economic, Spiritual/Educational

Conclusions and Recommendations: Priority?

copy

Route 2: Anstey Highland Route

Updated: May 14, 2008

Map

Overview

The proposed Anstey Highland Route explores over 100 kilometres of sub-alpine and alpine terrain in the Anstey Range paralleling the east Anstey Arm of Shuswap Lake between Sicamous and Seymour Arm. It includes the subalpine meadows of South and North Queest directly north of Sicamous, and the rugged Anstey ridgeline north to Anstey Glacier and the Sleeping Man Mountain Meadows.

The proposed south end would begin in the town of Sicamous, cross the Eagle River, travel at lake level north to the provincial marine parks at Marble Point, and then climb East toward the rock bluffs above Malakway known as the Cambie Knoll. The route then turns north up to South Queest Mountain. Two alternate routes connecting Sicamous to South Queest include use of the existing 1800 Forest Service Road up to the current winter access road maintained by the Eagle Valley Snowmobile Club, and use of the Simms Creek trail (currently mapped and signed as a mountain bike circuit) link to the 1800 FSR. Both of these routes create longer cross country loop options ideal for mountain bike and equestrian travel, but requires shared use of motorized roads. A third connecting trail to the South Queest summit has been proposed linking the community of Malakwa, via the Cambie Knoll. A Forestry Service Recreation site is located at the South Queest summit. This was also one of the locations of the regional Forestry fire lookout towers until recent closure. The last fire lookout station to be located at South Queest now resides on the grounds of Haney House Heritage Museum in Salmon Arm.

The route continues north following the height of land from South Queest through rolling subalpine meadows to the dominant feature of North Queest before descending via the west ridgeline to the saddle crossing near kilometre 18 of the Craigellachie Anstey River Forest Service Road. This portion of the route will require planning with the Eagle Valley Snowmobile Club who manage the area during the winter, as well as Federated Cooperative, Louisiana Pacific, Commercial Ski Tenure Operators, the CSRD, and other interests. Road access through the Queest highlands makes this a popular destination for summer ATV access. The area has also been included in the recently completed regional parks plan for Area E (CSRD), proposed as a dedicated park.

The region below North Queest is considered a good candidate for a hut location, particularly within the non-motorized designated recreation zone of Gorge Creek where backcountry skiing has become popular. This area has been included in the recent CSRD Area E Parks plan. A circuit hiking trail has also been proposed and plotted linked to the through route, but needs further consultation.

The proposed route then continues north of the Craigellachie Anstey River FSRoad climbing steeply through forested hillside into the meadows of Skyline Ridge. From here, the proposed route continues north connecting five distinct ridge lines between first, second, third, fourth, and fifth creek to the Anstey Glacier and Sleeping Man Mountain Meadows. To date, viable connections between each ridge line have been completed and verified

except for the first to second creek section, and the Fifth Creek to Sleeping Man Meadows section around Anstey Glacier.

Each section of the Anstey route also has significant merit as a hiking destination unto itself, with access routes possible from both the Anstey and Perry River roads. Each ridge section is considered ideal for hut locations, with a commercial catski lodge already located near the 3rd Creek ridge (Mustang Powder), and a second catski operation building a lodge in the First Creek area (Monashee Mountaincats.)

An extended lakeside trail route has been proposed for this area. Further consultation, study, and exploration of this concept are needed. Connection with the Provincial Park at the north end of Anstey Arm is an option with this route, creating new opportunity for non-motorized recreational backcountry experiences linked with lake-based recreation, including the proposed Shuswap Paddle Trail.

Applicable trail use, type and objectives

The South to North Queest portion of the proposed route is already well used for both motorized and non-motorized recreational use. It is proposed that trails for non-motorized use be created in negotiation with existing users, including the Eagle Valley Snowmobile Club and the local ATV club, as an alternate to use of the existing roads and motorized tracks. Non-motorized trails would be Type 4 unsurfaced one-way trails, 30-50 cm width tread on native soil, sometimes on rough and rocky terrain. (Whistler, 2001, p. 9) Given the existing recreational use in the area, trails would be suited to shared use for hiking, mountain biking, equestrian, and winter ski and snowshoe touring. Mitigation of caribou herd impacts, however, may limit future recreational use in this area and needs to be researched, monitored, and adapted accordingly under direction of the Provincial land resource ministries.

The northern Anstey Highland section between kilometre 18 on the Craigellachie Anstey River FSRoad and the Sleeping Man Mountain Meadows north of Anstey Glacier, is currently a corridor accessed primarily by ambitious backcountry hikers in the summer months, and by backcountry ski tour operators in the winter months. This area is broken by sections of rough, rocky, and mountainous terrain and requires experience in backcountry travel, camping, and route finding. It is proposed this section be designated a "mountain route" for wilderness hiking and ski touring only by small, well managed parties; and that only a few limited access trails from existing forest service roads be established. Access trails would be managed as Type 5 low-impact nature trails or lightly used wilderness trails no wider than 30-50 cm wide. Tread grubbing would be avoided, with sections of very rough terrain. Boardwalks or stonework would be used selectively to traverse sensitive areas and minimize impacts. (Whistler, 2001, p. 9) The rest of the route as it follows the ridgeline would be marked by cairns and avoid tread grubbing altogether. This section would require experience and knowledge in backcountry travel and navigation.

Overnight use throughout the full extension of the Anstey Highland Route is proposed as limited and focused. The use of established hut and camping sites would direct human impact to confined areas.

Proposed Route Description and Features Inventory

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Key Challenges and Potential

This region falls within the Seymour Grizzly, Mountain Goat and Caribou Resource Management Zones designated under the Okanagan-Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan. Further habitat impact and environmental assessment will be required along the Anstey Highland route to determine appropriate design, capacity, limitations, and long-term management strategies.

As well, discussion with tenure holders will be required, including existing trapping lines. Along the lakeside, any trail development will need to consult existing cabin owners.

Costs: Development, Construction, Operation

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SWOT Summary Table

Social, Environmental, Economic, Spiritual/Educational

Conclusions and Recommendations: Priority?

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Route 3: The Inner Shuswap Trail

Map #

Route Overview

The proposed Inner Shuswap trail route links several existing shorter trails with two sections of longer trail proposed under the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area C Parks plan. (R. Beardmore, D. Kaegi, and R. Rollins, 2003) On the southern Salmon Arm Bay side, the trail system starts at the regional landmark, Herald Park, known for the famous Margaret Falls. Mountain bike, equestrian and hiking routes travel north to White Lake and then on to Blind Bay, climbing through a series of creek side forest ecosystems – dry, grassy ponderosa pine; mossy wet cedar forest; classic northern mixed fir and spruce; and pockets of deciduous interspersed with pockets of grassy meadow where old homesteads once stood. Views await along the North Ridge of White Lake to the Lookout, and then further on draw the traveller's breath with stunning vistas of the west Shuswap from Blind Bay lookout. This is truly a route representational of the transitional micro-climates and rounded glacial ridges the Shuswap is know for.

Applicable trail use, type and objectives

The proposed trail route (overall) would be designated as primitive backcountry (NSTF, 2005) Type III/IV (Whistler Standards, 2003) un-surfaced single-track tread (30 – 50 cm width tread, brush clearance width to 1 m, height clearance to 2.4m according to Whistler Standards and Ministry of Forests guidelines, average grade objective at less than 10%, maximum grade sections within 15 – 20%, 5% tread out slope on climbing trail, with regular use of grade reversals throughout design for maximum water drainage according to IMBA Principals of Sustainable Trails) for mixed non-motorized use: hiking, cross-country mountain biking, snowshoeing, x-country ski touring and equestrian.

However, the Reinecker Creek Trail section as designated within the CSRD Area C parks plan would have an East and a West trail along the length of Reinecker Creek each with different objectives. This proposal, as part of

the extended Shuswap Trail, recommends the ecology, values and terrain of the East Side Trail route are best maintained as a primitive backcountry (NSTF, 2005) Type IV/V (Whistler Standards, 2003) low-impact nature trail for hiking, snowshoeing and x-country ski touring only. Trail tread should avoid grubbing where possible, utilizing boardwalks to traverse sensitive areas when necessary.

The Reinecker Creek West Side Trail, as mapped and approved within the CSRD Area C Parks Plan, currently follows an existing old forestry road that parallels Reinecker Creek. This route has been a traditional recreation corridor for mountain biking, equestrian use, hiking and motorized recreation. Within the CSRD Area C plan, this route would become the designated mountain bike and equestrian trail route between Herald Park and White Lake.

The recommendation that the full Inner Shuswap Trail Route linking Herald Park, White Lake and Blind Bay be designated non-motorized, is consistent with trail objectives presented in the CSRD Area C Parks Plan (R. Beardmore, D. Kaegi, and R. Rollins, 2003). This report recommends similar designation based on public consultation and the observation that “there is a lot of informal ATV use of forestry roads and trail in Area C and since the supply and access to these roads and trails is abundant, there appears to be little need to designate “motorized” trails at this point in time.” (p. 23)

Note: It is unclear whether the West Side trail will be able to carry “non-motorized” designation given existing motorized recreational use. This section of trail may require a multi-use recreational plan for motorized use.

Proposed signage would remain consistent with overall Shuswap Trail Alliance standards, but need to be integrated into existing trail Management standards where trailheads start within other jurisdictions. (e.g. BC Parks at the Herald Park Trailhead, and the CSRD Parks Office at White Lake and Blind Bay trailhead points.) Negotiation would include consistent signing of key junctions (4x4 post and standard route plate with direction arrow) and blaze marked for clear navigation using standard square metal blaze tags attached to trees.

Proposed Route Description and Features Inventory

Distances approx.	Description
A	Reinecker Creek East Side Trail
0 – 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailhead: Herald Provincial Park – the proposed hiking-only route begins on established trail at Herald Provincial Park on the Salmon Arm of Shuswap Lake. Trail ascends through dry grassland forest ecology dominated by Ponderosa Pine before returning to the creek above Margaret Falls and a dramatic transition back into a wet interior rainforest microclimate dominated by Cedar, mosses and devil’s club. These dramatic transitions encountered when moving within a hundred meters of the creek and the dryer forest above, as well as the limited human industry impact along the route, mark the Reinecker Creek trail as a significant corridor to both protect and experience the unique ecological transition zones of the Shuswap.

1 – 1.5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At approx. 1 km the proposed trail leaves Herald Provincial Park at its Northwest corner, top of the established trail just before the footbridge crossing of Reinecker Creek loops back down to the road. Here the trail continues north along the east side of Reinecker Creek. This is the beginning of the planned CSRD Area C Reinecker Creek Trail (east side route) for which Provincial approval has been granted. It follows an old (largely overgrown and eroded) trail. at approx. 1.5 km is a small waterfall through a narrow rock canyon. The old trail ascends along the east side of the falls. Shortly after this point the trail leaves the creek and ascends the hillside. (Look for old step remnants dug into the hillside.)
1.5 – 9.5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed inventory and route plotting still needs to be completed for this section. Here the route encounters a mix of interior marshland and forest punctuated by pocket grass meadows – a sign of the routes homesteading history. at approx. 8.75 km, the East Side trail rejoins with the West Side trail. The CSRD has also proposed a backcountry camping site in this area linked with the old homestead site. approx. 9.5 junction with FSRoad.
B	Reinecker Creek West Side Trail
0 – 10 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is proposed the existing Reinecker Creek West Side trail be designated as the mountain biking/equestrian route between Herald Park and White Lake. The Herald Park trailhead for this route begins just west of the Margaret Falls parking lot above the campground. Utilizing existing old forestry roads, the route is ideal for a cross-country style mountain bike experience. Two connections with the East Side Trail are planned within the CSRD system at approximately km 4 and 6 before joining with the East Side trail at km 10.
C	Reinecker Creek/White Lake Connection
9.5 – 12.5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at the 9.5 km FSR junction, the trail begins its descent toward White Lake. Note: planning for gates, stiles or fence dodge ways, and signage will be required in this area due to existing range tenure. Junction with White Lake Trail (east end) – or preferably – parallel above the old White Lake trail with a new single track pathway. Note: the area around the east end of White Lake is now protected within the Ministry of Environment's Parks. A viewing platform connecting the trail with this ecological site could potentially act as both an educational tool and deterrent to

	uncontrolled attempts at accessing the sensitive riparian area surrounding the lake.
D 12.5 – 14.5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail crosses the White Lake Forest Service Road (Parri Road) just east of White Lake, and begins ascent up to the ridgeline toward White Lake Lookout. Note: a side trail between the FSR junction, Herman lake, and Eagle Bay has been planned within the CSRD Area C Parks Plan. (See H.)
E	White Lake North Ridge Trail
14.5 – 24 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposed White Lake north ridge route parallels White Lake along the height of land to the north, linking with the existing White Lake Lookout trail (CSRD Area C Parks.) km 24 junction with FSR. Here the trail drops southwest through the forest to connect with the eastern access into the Blind Bay trail system (CSRD Area C Parks.)
F	Blind Bay Trails
24 – 28.5 to 32 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the Blind Bay trail system (CSRD Area C Parks) two alternate route options exist connecting White Lake and Blind Bay. The longer (approx. 8 km) contours around the hillside toward junctions linking with the Blind Bay Lookout trail before dropping back down toward the trailhead at Balmoral Road. The shorter trail (4.5 km) and more direct route drops lower crossing private land before reaching the Balmoral Road trailhead. The 2007 project targets the longer trail routes on crown land that have already received Section 57 Provincial approval for construction.
G	South Shuswap links with the Skimikin/Squilax Connector
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trail connections between the Balmoral Road trailhead to the junction with Blind Bay road (approx. 1200 metres) will require consideration and planning. at Blind Bay Road the trail route connects with the South Shuswap Recreational Trail Society's Blind Bay roadside pathway project linking Blind Bay with Sorrento. This route connection between Blind Bay, Sorrento, and Elson Road is conceptual at present. It is anticipated a combination of roadside paths, and agricultural trails will form the route. Desire has been expressed by local residences to see a formally approved trail access connecting the end of Elson Road with the proposed Skimikin Connector

	<p>Trail between Skimikin Lake, Black Mountain, Turtle Valley and Squilax.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An alternate connecting route could be considered extending the proposed Newsome Creek Trail in Sorrento up to Black Mountain. This would, however, require negotiation and planning with Notch Hill agricultural and residential property owners, including a strategy to reopen the Notch Hill Falls Trail which was closed by property owners due to disrespect and vandalism.
H	Cinnemousun Narrows Connector
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A concept route connecting White Lake, Herman Lake and the Cinnemousun Narrows has also been proposed within this region. Similarly, the CSRD Area C Parks Plan identifies a lakeshore circumnavigation of the “White Lake Peninsula” connecting with Cinnemousun Narrows.

Key Potential

- increased (4 season) overnight visitor attraction – including “inn-to-inn” hiking, mountain biking and equestrian experience – for smaller local accommodation operators (partnership links between Sunnybrae, Herald Park, White Lake, Blind Bay, Sorrento operators)
- proximity of trails for promotional and image enhancement purposes;
- enhanced day use trail experience builds on hallmark recognition of Margaret Falls
- significant property value retention and enhancement; (White Lake and Blind Bay trails)
- significant recreation and quality of life enhancement (White Lake and Blind Bay trails)
- enhanced attraction of retirement, semi-retirement, and lifestyle professionals
- increased expenditures in local communities by trail users (Sorrento, Blind Bay, Tappen, Salmon Arm)
- generation of revenue and in-kind investment from trail and infrastructure use (Trailhead Destination Accommodators)

Of all the regional trail clusters identified in this study, the Inner Shuswap system is perhaps the most “market ready.” Between Sunnybrae/Herald Park, White Lake, and Blind Bay existing accommodation operators are appropriately placed at trailhead locations lending themselves to an Inn-to-Inn style overnight trail experience. Distances between each “trailhead cluster” (See 5 Rings Trail, D. Elzer, 2004) are approximately spaced at 6 to 10 kilometres apart. A variety of small accommodation options include camping, bed and breakfast, lodge/resort, and cabin rentals.

As well, Margaret Falls, Herald Park, White Lake and Blind Bay/Sorrento already hold a destination profile in the Shuswap. The regional district’s Area E parks plan has obtained approvals of permission to create trails along both sides of Reinecker Creek and in the Blind Bay/White Lake area. And a strong group of supporting advocates

in the area have already expressed desire to move the project forward. Costs: Development, Construction, Operation.

Trailhead Inn-to-Inn Route Priorities

Interviews with existing backcountry lodge and front country accommodation operators suggest several high priority routes hold significant promise:

- **Inner Shuswap Trail Route** links Sunnybrae and Herald Park with White Lake and Blind Bay via a series of connecting trails currently planned by the CSRD. The concept of linking trailhead accommodators to create point-to-point travel experiences is high in this region. The length of trail segments is between 10 and 15 kilometers, an ideal distance for people hiking on foot. The trail routes themselves present moderate elevation gains and diverse forest ecologies, with ridge viewpoints and creek side travel. Existing accommodation operators are already in place, and transportation shuttle services are easily accessed. Further trail extension along Blind Bay road link Sorrento and points further west. (K. May, interview, Mar. 4, 2006)

Costs: Development, Construction, Operation

Preliminary estimates based on researched costing assumptions (see full Phase 1 Report).

Trail Routes	Target Km's	Consultation and Planning (10% of cost)	Construction (\$7 - \$10/m)	Operation and Maintenance (5% of cost)/yr
The Inner Shuswap Trail Route	35+	\$24,500 – \$35,000	\$245,000 – \$350,000	\$12,250 - \$17,500/yr

Conclusions and Recommendations: (STATUS = High Priority)

The significant environmental and natural encounter values of the Reinecker Creek East Side Trail, the already approved status of trails under the CSRD Area C Parks Plan, the demonstration of local community interest and support for an extended trail system particularly within the Blind Bay/White Lake community, and the clear opportunity for already existing accommodation operators (campgrounds, resorts, Bed and Breakfasts) to benefit as point-to-point and trailhead destinations place the Inner Shuswap Trail Route on the HIGH PRIORITY list.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Reinecker Creek, White Lake, and Blind Bay trail connections be targeted for 2007 development status, and that advanced community consultation and planning be initiated in cooperation with the CSRD Parks Planning Office.

Recommendation: In addition, it is recommended this trail route be used to develop a working model for local route development teams within the wider Shuswap Trail Alliance. The presence of an already identified core of community advocates is a strong asset to the project's success.

Route 4: Larch Hills Traverse

Map

Overview

A four-season single-track destination route for hiking, mountain-biking, equestrian backcountry, snowshoeing and skiing, this trail proposes trailhead access points in the North and South Canoe area of Salmon Arm in the

west and traverses along the northeast height of the Larch Hills area before descending down to Sicamous and eastern trail head access at the Shuswap River narrows bridge.

The rough and ready version is already a go. Existing skid track, forestry roads, and ski trails link up and over from South Canoe in Salmon Arm and drop down the 112 Forest Service Road meeting up with the Trans Canada Highway. A quick jog east finds the Old Sicamous Highway and a lovely 6-kilometre ramble into Sicamous thanks to the work of the Sicamous Chamber of Commerce. Inspiring views of the Salmon and Anstey Arms of Shuswap Lake greet the traveller.

This season, a six to ten person Services Canada Job Creation Partnership was developed with Community Futures and the Human Resources Skill Development office of the federal Government of Canada. Beginning work in August, the Larch Hills Traverse Trail along with ten kilometres of purpose built freeride mountain bike trails in the North Canoe Rubberhead area were approved and begun. At the time of writing, the trail team continues to make progress on construction the first epic cross country mountain bike ride of its kind for the region. The route will play double and triple duty as a summer hiking/horse riding route and winter playground for snowshoeing and skiing.

Together with the newly relocated Chalet at the Larch Hills Nordic Ski parking area, new opportunities for group events, backcountry tours, and ecological educational programs are possible. The traverse includes discussion to build the first pilot cabin in the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut trail system, providing an accessible wilderness site to develop and practice ecologically sound principles for backcountry hut construction.

The cabin and traverse trail route can provide extended nature-based recreational, educational and tourism opportunities in the immediate area. Current hut site proposals favour the Sicamous side of Larch Hills providing a new recreational four-season backcountry trail experience for Sicamous. This concept was identified in the Sicamous and District Recreation Development Study. 1997

This section of trail moved to a position of priority, given the current endorsement of both the Mayors of Salmon Arm and Sicamous, the support of the joint trails committee of the Larch Hills Nordic Society and Shuswap Outdoors, a strong regional Hut-to-Hut trail initiative steering cluster, positive invitations from local landowners, support for trail development from Federated Coop and Tolko Ltd., the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and the willingness of Community Futures Development Corporation to act as the key proponent sponsor.

The Government of Canada has funded this initiative.

Applicable trail use, type and objectives

This trail is designated primitive wilderness (Type III/IV Whistler Standards) unsurfaced single-track tread (30 – 50 cm width tread to a maximum of 1 metre, brush clearance width to 1 m, height clearance to 2.4m according to Whistler Standards and Ministry of Forests guidelines, average grade objective at less than 10%, maximum grade sections within 15 – 20%, 5% tread out slope on climbing trail, with regular use of grade reversals throughout design for maximum water drainage according to IMBA Principals of Sustainable Trails) for mixed non-motorized use: hiking, cross-country mountain biking, snowshoeing, x-country ski touring and equestrian.

Key junctions are signed (4x4 post and standard route plate with direction arrow). Route is consistently blaze marked for clear navigation using standard square metal blaze tags attached to trees.

Proposed Route Description and Features Inventory

Distances approx.	Description
A	Larch Hills Traverse: <u>Proposed</u> South Canoe Access
0 - .5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailhead sign marker erected. Route begins on established trail (200 m, no preparation required), then drops via old existing side hill track (no construction required) through open mixed forest (fir, spruce, cedar) to East Canoe Creek (brushing, removal of deadfall and vegetation, branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width, and unsurfaced 30 – 50 cm tread cleared to native soil (No removal of living trees required) Simple bridge span required across East Canoe Creek: 5 meter span, log stringer construction with timber decking (according to BC Ministry of Forest span standards) proposed corridor follows old trail line up to existing access lane, crosses lane, and continues up bank onto forested slope. Proposed enhancements to direct trail users and mitigate potential trespass concerns for nearby private landowners and irrigation pond water users include fencing, gates and signage for the lane crossing. (J. Maybee, Proposal, Oct. 25, 2006)
.5 – 4 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route climbs following height of land through open mixed forest (fir, spruce, pine) – requires mostly minor brushing, removal of deadfall and vegetation, branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width, and unsurfaced 30 – 50 cm tread cleared to native soil (No removal of living trees required). Regular use of grade reversals. Two sections require climbing turns and occasional switchbacks to maintain average and maximum grade objective. Regular blaze markers
4 – 6 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route follows existing unused forestry skid track that feels more like a country lane and encounters a series of spectacular views of Salmon Arm Bay – requires minor brushing and removal of deadfall, some branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width (No removal of living trees required) Three junction markers and regular blaze markers required Note: at this point there is an option to develop an alternate circuit using the existing skid track back around the southern height of land.
B	Larch Hills Traverse: <u>Proposed</u> North Canoe Access
0 – 4 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A second trailhead access has been proposed from the top of 70th street in

(various)	<p>Salmon Arm linking the North Canoe community with the Larch Hills Traverse. Consultation with local property owners is currently underway to consider feasibility and support. It is anticipated the trail would include one or two alternate routes creating options for shorter for non-motorized equestrian, cycling and hiking circuits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A core goal of the trail proposal would be to invite people into a peaceful setting and deeper awareness of the surrounding natural landscape. To this end, trail design should favor gentler grades and extensive use of natural shaping to encourage a slower pace and attentiveness to the natural surroundings. • The trail would climb to connect with km 6 as describe below.
C	Larch Hills Traverse: Cedar Circle
6 – 8 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • km 6 forms an important hub within the extended traverse. At this point, a key view point is encountered overlooking the entire Salmon Arm Bay with North Canoe impressively profiled far below. Dramatic vistas of Bastion Mountain, the Fly Hills and Mount Ida are presented in an unobstructed panorama. • Two route options have been designated creating a new feature 8 km backcountry trail loop through primarily older growth forest. It is proposed the northern route (essentially following the old Larch Hills Road) be designated as the mountain bike/equestrian link through to the Larch Hills Nordic trails. • Due to the natural values and soft forest floor, it is recommended the southern route be maintained as a primitive backcountry (NSTF, 2005) Type IV/V (Whistler Standards, 2003) low-impact nature trail for hiking, snowshoeing and x-country ski touring only. Trail tread should avoid grubbing where possible, utilizing boardwalks to traverse sensitive areas when necessary. • Together, the north and south routes form a new circuit within the Larch Hills Nordic North Hub backcountry ski trails, and when connected with existing North Hub trails create an opportunity to walk in older growth forest rarely encountered in the Larch Hills.
8 – 12 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route links to existing Larch Hills Nordic Society Trails – Hemlock Glide/White Pine Walk/Deer Track/Clear Cut Connector (no trail construction necessary) • Ten junction markers and regular blaze markers to be added to existing signed junctions
D	Larch Hills Traverse: The Knoll
12 – 27 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Knoll Route navigates within existing cutblocks, mixed open forest (fir, spruce), and re-growth blocks – requires brushing, removal of deadfall and

	<p>vegetation, branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width, and unsurfaced 30 – 50 cm tread cleared to native soil (No removal of living trees required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section of trail, while having to remain flexible to the working forest environment of the Larch Hills, finds opportunity for several dramatic view scapes toward Sicamous and the Anstey Arm. The steep alpine of second, third and Anstey peaks beckon in the distance. • 13 junction markers and regular blaze markers required
21 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junction with 112 spur option (see below)
24 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junction with 400 m Lookout side trail – requires brushing, removal of deadfall and vegetation, branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width, and unsurfaced 30 – 50 cm tread cleared to native soil (No removal of living trees required) • junction marker and regular blaze markers required
E 27 - 29 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent to Spallumcheen Road follows direct line to Sicamous Narrows. Note: the trail alignment has now been revised with positive approval to cross private properties directly above highway. • Requires brushing, removal of deadfall and vegetation, branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width, and unsurfaced 30 – 50 cm tread cleared to native soil (No removal of living trees required) • Requires climbing turns and some switchback sections to maintain average and maximum grade objectives: side hill tread (max 15 - 20% slope), use of regular grade reversals to ensure water drainage and minimal erosion, with basic rock water bars placed every 15 m in sections where grade reversals unfeasible, 5% tread out slope for water runoff. • Junction marker and regular blaze markers required • Trailhead kiosk and sign marker erected at road access. Signage indicates safe pedestrian route under and over bridge to Sicamous wharf. • Option: construct small trailhead parking area on FSRoad southwest of narrows bridge. (Site approvals required.)
F	Larch Hills Nordic Trailhead
11 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key concept in the shape of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative is the idea of linking together key trailhead sites into a series of smaller circuit options. The Larch Hills Nordic main parking area and Chalet become a main trailhead within this system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the winter boasts a number of options for linking with the Larch Hills Traverse, it has been recommended the summer route primarily follow the winter snowshoe route to Larch Lake. This route lends itself well to a natural trail experience avoiding roadways as much as possible.
G	112 Spur Option from km 21
0 – 2.5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 112 Road option follows existing Forestry skid track and then 112 FSR. Minimal brushing required on first kilometre. No trail construction required. Five junction markers and regular blaze markers required
2.5 – 3.25 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route angles through forest to Trans Canada Highway – requires brushing, removal of deadfall and vegetation, branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width, and unsurfaced 30 – 50 cm tread cleared to native soil (No removal of living trees required) Junction marker required at highway, Dangerous crossing sign
3.25 – 9 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route crosses highway and links with existing Old Sicamous Highway trail – no trail construction required. Ten junction markers and regular blaze markers to be added to existing signed junctions Trailhead kiosk and sign marker erected
H	Hyde Mountain Circuit
0 – 7 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desire to see a trail link with Hyde Mountain Golf Course and development was expressed by Bill Wilson. Consultation with private land owners, the railway owners, and further route exploration will be needed to determine viability. However, a route link with Hyde Mountain Golf Course would establish a hallmark hike/bike/equestrian trail circuit on the east side of the Larch Hills Traverse accessible directly from the Sicamous community.
I	Rubberhead Mountain Bike Trail System
0 – 9 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of these trails follow existing unused forestry skid track – requires minor brushing and removal of deadfall, some branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width (No removal of living trees required) the remaining 50% require brushing, removal of deadfall and vegetation, branches pruned to 2.4m height/1 m width, and unsurfaced 30 – 50 cm tread cleared to native soil (No removal of living trees required)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 junction markers and regular blaze markers required • Trailhead kiosk and sign marker erected
J	Salmon Arm to Sicamous Lakeside Trail
0 – 20 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceived as a continuation of the existing Old Sicamous Highway Trail, considerable interest was expressed through consultation feedback both in Sicamous and Salmon Arm for a “family friendly” walking, biking and equestrian trail linking the two communities. • While much of the terrain between the Trans Canada Highway and the lakeshore does, in fact, have enough space to consider construction of a trail way; key sections with private property create bottleneck points. Trail feasibility will depend on favourable support from these property owners. • Two alternate routing options have been proposed: one involves crossing back over to the south side of the highway and constructing a continuous trail within the 200 meter buffer between highway and working forest cut blocks. While this would address the concept of connecting a low level easy grade trail between the two communities, it would be limited as far as visual quality and impacted by noise from the highway. • The other proposal involves promotion of a shoulder walking season utilizing the low water line of early spring and late summer/fall. Described as a “walk the waterline” experience, the route would literally be the Shuswap shoreline between Salmon Arm and Sicamous.

Key Challenges and Potential

copy

Costs: Development, Construction, Operation

copy

SWOT Summary Table

Social, Environmental, Economic, Spiritual/Educational

Conclusions and Recommendations: (STATUS = High Priority)

copy

Route 5: Skimikin Connection

Map

Overview

copy

Applicable trail use, type and objectives

copy

Proposed Route Description and Features Inventory

copy

Key Challenges and Potential

copy

Costs: Development, Construction, Operation

copy

SWOT Summary Table

Social, Environmental, Economic, Spiritual/Educational

Conclusions and Recommendations: Priority?

copy

Route 6: Salmon Arm Bay

Map

Overview

A potential classic! This 40-kilometre circuit walk or bicycle route links the communities around Salmon Arm Bay, with multiple options for shorter trips. The proposed route concept links Canoe Beach with the Salmon Arm Greenway trails through Park Hill, Coyote Park and Raven, the foreshore nature trail, Salmon Arm walkway, then picks up the Adams Lake Indian Band's proposal for a West Bay trail linking to Switzmalph Cultural Centre and Sandy Point, then continues to Pierre's Point and the resorts and campgrounds toward Tappen and around to the Sunnybrae Bluffs and foreshore.

It would be reasonable to describe the route proposal as the Great Salmon Arm Estuary circuit, with year round seasonal bird migrations, riparian conservation values, and ecological education potential. As well, the First Nations communities of Adams Lake Indian Band, Neskonlith Indian Band and Little Shuswap Indian Band stand to leverage significant safety, lifestyle, and tourism economic values.

Additional options add trail right through to Herald Park, Margaret Falls and the CSRD proposed Reinecker Creek trail on the North side of the bay; and connections to the Rubberhead Mountain Bike trails, Larch Hills and the proposed Sicamous connection on the Southwest side of the bay.

Conceived as both a walking and cycling route accessible to all levels of ability, the circuit presents significant potential for both lifestyle and economic benefits to local communities.

Applicable trail use, type and objectives

copy

Proposed Route Description and Features Inventory

copy

Key Challenges and Potential

In reality, every section of this proposed route currently exists in planned form on paper. The CSRD, Adams Lake Indian Band, the Switzmalph Cultural Society, SABNES, the Salmon Arm Greenway's Committee, Community Futures, Salmon Arm Economic Development, and the city have been working to create connecting pathways around the bay. Some exist, some are mapped and some remain still a concept on paper.

Ultimately, a concerted partnership effort backed by provincial, regional, municipal and First Nations support will make this one a reality. CP Rail also figures as a major player, as do organizations like the Salmon River Watershed Roundtable.

Two noted areas of environmental sensitivity will require special planning and environmental assessments. These include the route crossing the Salmon River, and the route along the Sunnybrae foreshore. A trail study is already complete on the Salmon River route.

Costs: Development, Construction, Operation

copy

SWOT Summary Table

Social, Environmental, Economic, Spiritual/Educational

Conclusions and Recommendations: Priority?

copy

The Shuswap Water Trail

Map

Overview

copy

Applicable trail use, type and objectives

copy

Proposed Route Description and Features Inventory

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortly after the Shuswap River Hatchery, just west of Cherryville, comes the first of the classic paddle launches about four kilometres from the community of Reiswig. Here the Shuswap takes a new bend north through Shuswap Falls before meeting up with Lawson Creek.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Shuswap River now travels north creating a classic paddle route to its mouth into Mabel Lake.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mabel Lake, named one of the top 10 fishing destinations in British Columbia, is a classic glacially trenched interior fiord running north/south between the Park/Sawtooth Ranges on its east and Trinity Hills and then Hunters Range on the west. A popular holiday destination, Mabel Lake still retains its high mountain character having not attracted the same degree of motorized boat traffic of the larger Shuswap lake system. A proposed series of overnight paddle stops envisions links with the popular Mabel Lake Provincial Park in the south, several of the smaller recreation sites on the east shores of the Lake, and the community of Kingfisher halfway up the lake on the west.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Kingfisher the Shuswap River finds an out in the form of a short series of class III/IV ledges known as the Skookumchuck Rapids – or just the Chucks. Below the Chucks, the Shuswap River works its way west through occasional class II rapids toward Cooke Creek and the Kingfisher Interpretive Centre where a concerted effort to educate and secure the threatened salmon spawning beds is underway. This is part two of the classic Shuswap River Paddle Route, with a series of riverside camping pullouts along the way to Ashton Creek.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Ashton Creek, the river picks up volume but relaxes in challenge offering summer paddlers a pleasant meander to Enderby through ever increasing pastoral landscapes. Then with its arrival at Enderby the River makes an abrupt swing north below the dramatic watch of the Enderby Cliffs. This is agricultural North Country. The river works a series of lazy bends in a not-too-hasty glide past farms, the tiny village of Grinrod, and occasional bed-and-breakfasts before flowing into Mara Lake below the North Eastern watch of the Larch Hills, home to the region’s cross country ski mecca.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Sicamous, a short narrows past the communities defining flotilla of house boat companies, wharfs and marinas pops the watersheds long journey from the eastern slopes of the Monashees into the great interior fiord know as the Shuswap.

Key Challenges and Potential

copy

Costs: Development, Construction, Operation

copy

SWOT Summary Table

Social, Environmental, Economic, Spiritual/Educational

Conclusions and Recommendations: Priority?

copy

Section Seven: Management Strategy

A Discussion of Strategic Options for Implementation

Based on discussion and research over the past 16 months there appear to be three broad options for implementation of the proposed Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative. These were presented for discussion to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Board and General Steering Session (May 10th, 2006 Okanagan College, Salmon Arm) as follows:

Option A: “Bit by bit as we’re able. . .”

Under this option, the work of consultation, route plotting, mapping, approvals, and trail building is managed using existing volunteer time and resources, ***as they are available.***

An overall strategic vision for the networked trail system, including potential hut locations, still guides the work regionally, and priorities are established to focus and direct the SH2H efforts. However, the timeline for development is much longer and dictated by available interest, time and resources. (15 – 30 years)

Benefit focuses primarily on local recreational interest and use. Long-term maintenance is minimal. Ability to leverage environmental, educational and economic advantages minimal. Overall vulnerability to an over-stretched volunteer base is high. As well, turn over in the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance will affect consistency

This option is typical of many long distance trails developed and managed by small, local volunteer groups. The ability to maintain momentum and maintenance over the long term often weakens as key leadership moves, tires out, or loses motivation.

Option B: “Leveraged Strategic Opportunity . . .”

This, essentially, is the crux decision before the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance. Under this option, regional partnership commitment is leveraged to access investment funding and ***dedicates human resource capacity to move objectives forward over a three, five and ten year timeline.***

Priorities over three years target 250 kilometres of “well-designed, well-signed, well-maintained” networked trail infrastructure ready for public recognition during the 2010 Winter Olympics, including at least one five-night hut-to-hut ready section.

Preparation of a long-term (2011+) management plan is developed during the first three-year period, with a target for implementation during the following five to ten year timeline. This plan includes an operational maintenance plan, marketing strategy, and revenue generating objectives targeting sustainability by 2015.

Overall regional consultation input, provincial support, the current funding climate and economy, local environmental interests, and stakeholder support suggests we are in a five-year window of peak opportunity. The past 16 months have gathered a foundation of contacts and planning resources in preparation for this direction.

Multiple long-term benefits include leveraged support for social health and wellness objectives, local environmental stewardship efforts, new non-extractive economic opportunities, and advocacy of regional First

Nation's interests. These benefits are significantly magnified with a clear commitment to sustainable natural design principles and an inter-regional approach to management and marketing. (See the *5 Rings Trail Strategy*)

Key to this Option's viability will be a clear governance commitment from the four local Shuswap First Nation bands, regional district and municipalities. In addition, an appetite for inter-regional partnership with regional governance bodies throughout the Okanagan Valley increases the long-term sustainable viability of the initiative.

To date, formal endorsement of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative has been made by the City of Salmon Arm, the District of Sicamous, and the Board of Directors of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and is needed from the Shuswap Nation Band Councils in the region.

Option C: "A Hybrid approach . . ."

Under this option, a hybrid of objectives is considered based on the potential for one or more Trail Alliance partner organizations to assume responsibility for ongoing coordination of the strategy. This common point of coordination would be critical.

The Trail Alliance would still function as a common meeting point and identify development priorities. However, priorities would be generated in large part based on individual organization's internal objectives.

An example of this model might see Community Futures or the CSRD Parks Planning Office assuming the initiative under their own management objectives and working in partnership with organizations like Larch Hills Nordic Society, the Back Country Horsemen, the Switzmalph Cultural Society, local municipalities or the Shuswap Band Councils to advance project objectives.

A key limitation of this model is the vulnerability to internal workloads, time demands and priorities. Capacity for long-term management, maintenance and development would also be limited, and capacity for broader inter-regional partnership would be limited according to organizational mandates.

Recommendation:

Based on:

- The generally favourable and wide-spread regional interest in the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway concept proposal expressed during the past 16 month consultation period;
- The apparent funding opportunities currently available addressing health and wellness, environmental sustainability, recreation and tourism, and regional economic development;
- Key areas within the Shuswap watershed presenting strong historic, cultural, ecological and natural values for non-motorized learning, recreation and tourism opportunities;
- Significant increase in unmanaged recreational land use throughout the region;
- Growing local concern for ecologically sustainable land resource practices;
- The PR opportunity presented by the 2010 Winter Olympics;
- And favourable support from provincial land resource management;

...it is recommended we continue to actively implement the leveraged strategic opportunities of Option B. The General Membership of the Shuswap Trail Alliance adopted this option. (SHTA, minutes, May 10, 2006)

5 Year Strategic Planning Objectives

At the May meeting of the Shuswap Trail Alliance (SHTA, minutes, May 10, 2006), strategic development objectives were adopted calling for the establishment of paid management capacity (Option B above) to assist in guiding the project over the next four years of implementation. A backup strategy calling on volunteer/in-kind management support is included in the plan. Budget planning and investment fundraising is underway. This includes an exercise to demonstrate existing regional commitments to trail development as a tool toward additional leveraged funding investments.

For an extended Phase 2 breakdown of planning goals, target objectives, and planning timeline, see Appendix.

- **July 2006 Pilot trail development project begins:** Larch Hills Traverse/Rubberhead Trail
- **Fall 2006 Complete phase 1 consultation feedback,** research results and development strategy.
- **2006/2007 Advanced route plotting:** North Shuswap, Skimikin/Squilax, Inner Shuswap, Anstey Highland
- **2006/2007: Phase 2 implementation:** management team in place, investment fundraising
Marketing strategy developed/first round Provincial awareness/local promotional guide materials
- **2007 Target 70 + km new trail development/complete Larch Hills Traverse/pilot hut site initiated/**
Marketing focus: Provincial awareness
- **2008 Target 70 + km trail development/2 new hut sites/**
Marketing focus: National awareness
- **2009 Target 70 + km trail development/5 day hut-to-hut route established/**
Marketing focus: International
- **2010+ Target 5 – 10 year management strategy implementation begins**

Organizational Strategy

Discussions in the spring of 2005 led to the development of an organizational structure and management framework for the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance. The following parameters along with Appendix attachments, Society constitution and organizational diagram provide a picture of this structure.

The organizational goal:

Create an alliance of regional partners committed to the sustainable development and management of a self-propelled, nature-based trail, waterway and hut system that will increase the nature-based recreational, cultural, environmental and economic values of our region. (See original vision and principles statement)

Mandate:

- to strategically plan and manage the recreational, cultural, environmental and economic assets of a linked hut-to-hut trail and waterway system throughout the Shuswap/North Okanagan region;
- to function as the body that shapes and manages our regional partnership within the wider 5 Rings Trail strategy (as this develops)
- to promote, support and provide resources for local self-propelled (non-motorized) nature-based trail and waterway route development initiatives throughout the region, particularly as they contribute to a linked trail system
- to act as a common meeting point for planning, developing strategies to address common issues, share information and resources, and liaise with other related groups (including ministry offices, funding sources, motorized recreation, search and rescue, hunting/fishing interests, industry, other regions)
- to maximize leverage and impact of funding resources

These initial goals were developed into a full Constitution for the now registered society of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance. They provide the core direction of the Trail Alliance's work together and set the criteria by which activities of the Alliance are prioritized and selected. (See Appendices.)

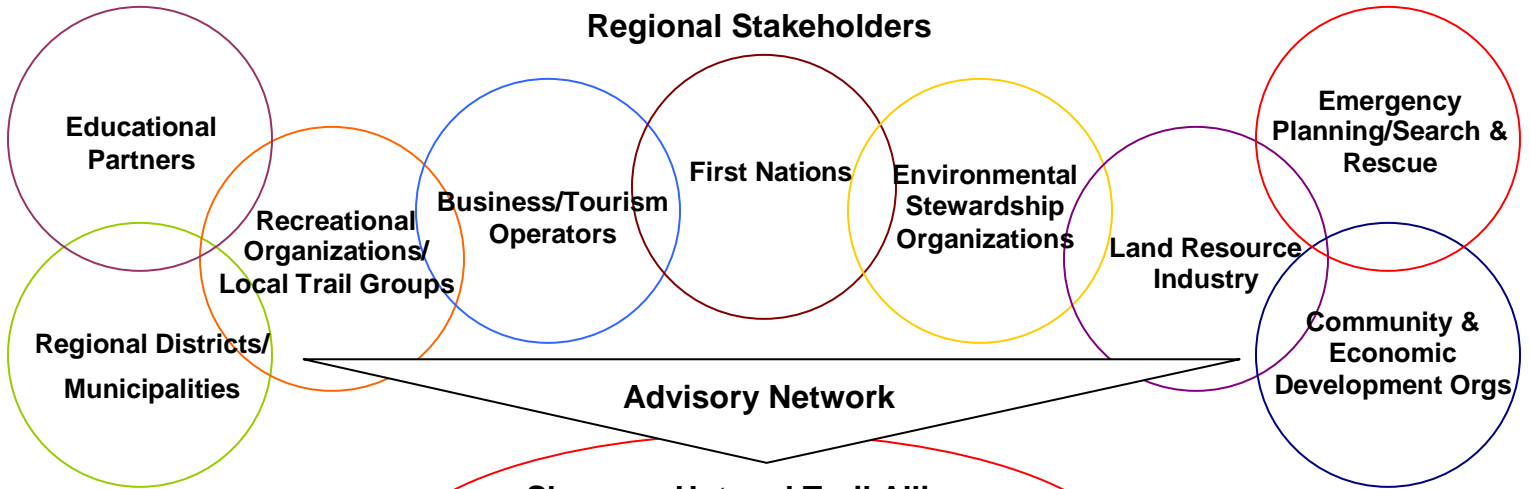
Organizational Structure: A visual representation

Effective business operations are built on an organization's capacity to apply adequate time, people and resources to every action undertaken. The regional nature of the initiative, along with its multi-stakeholder ownership, requires an organizational structure with the capacity to engage leadership at all levels of the community.

Figure 1: Organizational Structure (next page)

The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance

Regional Stakeholders



Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance

Includes representation from key stakeholder groups, vested individuals, and local trail project reps. . .

Partnerships

Partnerships

Local Trail Route Stewardship Teams

Organizational Management

- Concept Development
- Compliance/Government Liaison
- Community Consultation
- Environmental Stewardship/Adaptive Management
- Fundraising/Financial Management
- Business Operations
- Marketing & Membership
- HR/Volunteer Coordination
- Regional business/Operator Development strategy
- Educational program development
- IT Systems management

Management Team

Hut & Trail Route Project Management

- Planning & Design
- Route Plotting & Mapping
- Construction
- Maintenance

Developed and maintained by:

- Partner organizations supported by alliance
- Shared effort between partners & alliance
- Directly by the trail alliance
- By private operators

Link to the Other Regions

- Provincial Land Resource Ministries
- Provincial DMO's/Tourism Associations
- Inter-regional Organizations & Strategies
- National & International Organizations
- Trails BC/Trans Canada Trail
- Bearfoot Canada/Adventure Okanagan Coop.

Southern Interior Trail Council Alliance (5 Rings Trail)

- Common inter-regional meeting forum
- Coordination of common signage, theme, language, & image
- Coordinated contact point for provincial & federal orgs
- Development of "best practices" codes
- Partners in construction & management of huts
- Coordinates commercial use thresholds and compliance
- Coordinated link with existing businesses/trailheads – accommodation, operators, transport, etc.
- New business development support/co-mentoring
- Coordination of travel experiences & marketing effort, including production of "5 Rings Trail" guides
- Live Calendar linked reservations and booking system

Other Regions

Updated: Jan. 21, 2007

Advisory Network – regional stakeholders guide the direction of the trail alliance by participating in the advisory network. This might take the form of issue specific sessions such as multi-use trail policy setting, or conflict resolution. The Advisory Network would invite representation from all regional stakeholder groups (First Nations, government, communities, industry, recreation, environment, landowners, etc.) to provide regular counsel and direction to the Trail Alliance.

It is anticipated the Advisory Network would meet formally at least twice annually, but is invited to participate in the general steering committee meetings on a regular basis. In many cases, representative organizations on the Advisory Council would also be member organizations within the Alliance

Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Membership – Membership will need to embrace several variations. These might include individual members, associations, and business members. A discussion about the benefits and roles of these memberships will help to develop the overall organizational structure.

- **General Steering Committee** – Member organizations and individuals oversee and direct the work of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance and all projects within its mandate, including the Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative. The General Steering Committee functions through monthly general meetings of the membership as a whole.

Regional Management Committee (Board of Directors) – is the appointed body responsible for overseeing the operation and work of the regional trail alliance. The process for appointing the management committee will need to ensure a solid representation of the regional partnership while at the same time providing for a functional working body. Elected on behalf of the General membership.

Management Team – through the focused support of a management team working directly with the regional management committee the operation and work of the alliance is carried out. This includes contracting for specific project requirements as needed, liaison with other stakeholder leadership, coordination of volunteer leadership and the development of related working groups and partnership initiatives. Core work tasks include:

- overall concept design and strategic planning
- day to day project administration and management
- financial planning, fundraising and management
- geographical asset management – route development, design, mapping, field plotting and land resource license applications,
- environmental/social impact study, monitoring and adaptive management,
- trail design, planning, building and maintenance
- hut design, planning, building and maintenance
- economic resource development – micro-business/operator development
- educational program development and marketing,
- community liaison, marketing and PR

Regional Route Teams – in each of the six identified trail route sections local trail advocacy and development teams (or clusters) are beginning to form. These advocacy groups become critical in guiding the local ownership and direction of the trail network, motivating community consultation, conducting route exploration, and developing priorities. A more formal articulation of role and structure will be needed as these ad hoc advocacy groups develop.

It is conceivable that at some point a conversation with the Regional District Parks Commission will need to look at how the Shuswap Trail Alliance more formally relate under the regional commissions.

Two parts to the work

The attached diagram attempts to represent the dominant aspects of work the organization needs to manage. These have been separated into two streams: organizational management and project management.

- **Organizational Management** – refers to those broad tasks required to guide, grow, promote and direct the overall organization. The listed tasks suggest some of the areas that will need a responsible chair and working committee, and for which the management team would be responsible.
- **Project Management: Trails and Huts** – refers to the on the ground planning, design, construction and maintenance side of things with two focuses: trails and huts. Multiple project teams would exist related to specific geographical trail and hut locations. These would include:
 - those developed and maintained by partner organizations (e.g. the Gordon Dale Memorial Trail Society, CSRD, etc.) with support from the trail alliance;
 - those developed and maintained as a shared effort between partner organizations and the trail alliance (e.g. the Larch Hills Connector);
 - those developed and maintained directly by the trail alliance;
 - and some potentially developed and maintained by private operators (as in the case of the 10th Division Mountain Huts of Colorado.)

Partnerships

Along with partnerships focused directly on developing trails and huts, regional partnerships will be required to move other key aspects of the initiative forward. For example:

- Developing a sound risk management plan will require working in partnership with the Shuswap Search and Rescue Society.
- Developing a regional marketing campaign to promote the trail and hut system will require working in partnership with the CSRD Tourism Marketing Committee, and other Destination Marketing Organizations like TOTA, and Bearfoot Canada.
- Drafting best practices for shared use of trails will require working in partnership with the regional cycle club, the BC Backcountry Horsemen's Association, and the regional hiking organizations like Shuswap Outdoors.

- Creating a strategy to build opportunities for business and business start-ups will require a working partnership with Community Futures, the CSRD Economic Development Office, the Salmon Arm Economic Development Corporation, and the regional Chambers of Commerce.
- Designing an environmental stewardship and adaptive management strategy will require working in partnership with provincial ministries such as Sustainable Resources, Water Land and Air Protection, with our regionally appointed environmental stewards, and with regional environmental advocacy organizations.

The Link to Other Regions and Defining What This Might Look Like

On the diagram, the link to provincial land resource ministries, destination marketing organizations, other regional strategies like the Okanagan Sustainable Prosperity Strategy, and Trails BC/Trans Canada Trails are shown by our link to other regions. Ultimately, as other regions follow suit it will become more effective to cooperate in our liaison with these national, provincial and inter-regional bodies. There is a desire to take a lead in defining what the shape of this inter-regional link would look like.

Human Resource Strategy

Work conducted during the Phase 1 consultation and concept development has presented a clear picture of the scope and work breakdown requirements necessary to move the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative forward. (See Alliance organizational diagram)

Realization of the hut and trail system as a recreational, economic, and environmentally sustainable resource will be viable only with adequate HR capacity to meet workload demands. Based on the Larch Hills Traverse Trail as a pilot project for research purposes, route section development from concept to construction can average a 2-4 year period.

Targeting significant advancement of at least one route section a year, with six routes and one water trail currently identified, would suggest an 8 to 10 year development plan is reasonable. While this timeframe could be shortened given adequate community, political, and financial support, an investment strategy will still need to be sustainable within this timeframe to allow for a transition from development to long-term maintenance and management. The development time frame must also include a parallel marketing and promotional program.

A Need for Paid and Volunteer HR Options

While volunteer/in-kind commitment will continue to be an essential core of the initiative's HR capacity, the demands of the project are well beyond reasonable volunteer expectations in order to be sustainable. Volunteer coordination alone has the potential to consume a major portion of the management team's time. An investment in management HR is needed to continue advancing the project objectives forward.

HR Capacity Needs

Based on a review of existing trail and hut-to-hut networks, and an analysis of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative objectives, the following Human Resource capacity is needed to viably move the initiative forward:

Organizational Management (at minimum a full time project manager; could be fulfilled by a part time manager and assistant; ideally a full time project manager or executive director aided by additional assistance)

Responsibilities include coordination and oversight for:

- Concept Development
- Compliance/Government Liaison
- Community Consultation
- Environmental Stewardship/Adaptive Management
- Fundraising/Financial Management
- Business Operations
- Marketing & Membership
- HR/Volunteer Coordination
- Regional business/Operator Development strategy
- Educational program development
- IT Systems management

Construction and Maintenance Management (ideally coordinated under a single operations manager coordinating additional HR as required, including spring maintenance crews, summer build projects and volunteer work parties) Responsibilities include coordination and oversight for:

- Trail and Hut Planning & Design
- Route Plotting & Mapping
- Construction
- Maintenance

Additional Contract Services – the following additional specialized professional services will be required on a contractual basis. Again, these services may be met by both in-kind and paid contracts.

- Project Administration/Financial Management – the scope of the initiative warrants dedicated HR support for ongoing administration and financial operations, including:
 - Database maintenance,
 - Filing,
 - Correspondence,
 - Bookkeeping and accounting.
- Licensed Professional Biologist –

- Environmental Impact assessment – Anstey Highland and Lake routes, North Shuswap Big Bend Gold Trail route, Salmon Arm Bay trail sections
- Develop adaptive management strategy for habitat sensitive areas
- GIS/Mapping Consultant –
 - Research geo-spatial data for each route section
 - Prepare route section maps for ministry tenure applications
 - Prepare revised maps for final plotting and construction
- Legal Counsel
 - Overall regional organizational structure
 - Insurance and Liability
- Website/Communications Development
 - Website design and update
 - Integrated logo, signage and trailhead design

Project Specific HR Needs – the following projects will require both additional supervision and work crew capacity. Either volunteer or paid staff may fulfill these roles. (See *Sources of HR Capacity* below.)

Potential pilot project sites that could be construction-ready by the spring include:

- Rubberhead Mountain Bike Trail system (MoF application in process)
- Larch Hills Over the Top connector trail (LHNS, Fed Coop, route ready)
- Sicamous/Queest Mountain trail sections (Area E, Fed Coop, Chamber)
- South Shuswap/Skimikin Trail sections (BCBC Horsemen, LSIB)
- Little Shuswap Indian Band/North Shuswap trail sections (LSIB, Area F)
- Gordon Dale Memorial Trail pilot trail sections? (GDMT Society)
- LHNS chalet relocation and upgrade (LHNS)
- Mara Lookout Upgrade? (Kingfisher Interpretive Centre, GDMT Society)

Route priorities for advanced plotting, compliance and application prep include:

- Anstey Highland and Lakeside routes (Area E, Chamber, route advanced)
- West Bay/Salmon Arm Bay trail (ALIB, NIB, Switzmalph, SA, OC team)
- North Shuswap Big Bend Gold route (LSIB, Area F, Chamber)
- Blind Bay/Reinecker circuit (BCBC Horsemen, Area C, SSRTS)

- Fly Hills/Rotary Lookout trail system
- Gorge Creek Ski area intensive use hut site (Area E, Chamber)

Sources of HR capacity:

A leveraged approach to fulfilling the HR needs of the initiative will be needed to meet the demands of the initiative. Interviews with existing trail systems, hut-to-hut trail networks, and government land resource management, as well as a review of existing print resources would suggest the following sources be accessed to meet the HR needs of the initiative:

- In-kind (volunteer) contributions from Shuswap Trail Alliance partners
- Government infrastructure and development project funding – local, Prov., Federal
- Short term contract and consultation funding
- Private investment and fundraising
- JCP/Youth Skills Link project funding – Services Canada
- Existing ministry resources – ILRB, Ministry of Tourism, MoF, Rap Attack
- Existing service organizations and clubs
- Educational Partnerships: Okanagan College, Thompson Rivers University (including student practicum’s and research partnerships)
- Related Partnerships: e.g. Shuswap Search and Rescue
- Community Development programs: Katimavik, Canada World Youth
- Other related project funding: environmental research and education, health and wellness education, active transportation initiatives
- Service Learning programs: SD#83 and others
- Private operators – potential to assume tenure responsibility for specific areas such as maintenance

Investment and grant funding would best serve core management roles capable of sustaining longer-term coordination positions. It is recommended these positions be salaried or contracted. It is also recommended these positions not be devolved in favour of training or work experience placements. Consistency is critical. A constantly revolving placement would not serve the needs of the initiative well in these positions.

Short-term contracts, work experience placements, partnership projects and practicum assignments would best serve short-term, targeted and assisting roles linked to specific projects.

Services Canada Job Creation Partnership Trail Crew Projects

One component to the proposed HR strategy for trail development would see a continuation of the Services Canada Job Creation Partnership Trail Crew project over the next two to four years. Under this strategy, up to four individual crews of four + one supervisor would target a significant portion of the proposed trail each build

season. Completion of the Larch Hills Traverse Trail pilot project will provide important data on reasonable targets within the Services Canada JCP framework. Negotiations toward a 2007 projects will begin in November 2006.

Workspace, Mapping Station and Office Infrastructure

While much of the volunteer based coordination of the SH2H will continue to draw on the in-kind contribution of stakeholder partners, dedicated workspace and support infrastructure including computer, filing, phone, and standard office supplies are required. Room is needed for coordinated planning and mapping, including tabletop space enough to spread out full maps. Map storage is also a requirement, as well as Internet access and shelving for the trails resource library and Phase 1 archives.

A dedicated mapping station has been assembled through the Larch Hills Traverse Pilot Trail project. This includes computer with ArcView software and GPS download capability. Ideally, Shuswap Trail Alliance members would be able to access the mapping computer independently of general administration and operations files. This computer may be able to double as the website administrator.

Equipment storage is a requirement, as is work crew meeting and planning space during building and maintenance projects. The Larch Hills Traverse Pilot Trail Project has allowed the Shuswap Trail Alliance to rent project workspace. This is serving as a base model for future project workspace requirements.

Consideration was given for more publicly accessible and visible space that serves to profile the SH2H initiative. While public profile and accessibility was recognized as important, the Shuswap Trail Alliance board of directors believed these goals could appropriately be served through ongoing public relations and promotional activities, presence at appropriate public events, and coordination of visibility materials (displays, posters, flyers, membership applications forms) through Visitor Information Centres, municipal offices, and participating retail partners. At present, physical space has been targeted to serve planning and construction needs. (Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Board Minutes, October 4th, 2006)

Marketing Strategy

Successful trails require effective marketing, and that is a complex issue . . . trails must be what the market requires, and. . . above all the trail must create a fashionable image. Trails which are worthy but boring, or ill conceived, do not succeed.

(B. Lane, 1999)

Travel trends continue to emphasize people's interest in comprehensive experiences that are culturally relevant, historically rich, close to nature, and authentic to local communities. The new national *Canada: Keep Exploring* travel brand speaks to this deeply rooted motivation within all travellers. (CTC, 2005)

In articulating a marketing strategy for the Shuswap Hut and Trail initiative, we will do well to focus more on the inner desire for unique experiences, the thrill of sharing epic adventure stories with others, an interest in understanding people, cultures and ecology; we will do well to define not the destination, but the compelling journey – or pilgrimage of encounter – that awaits the traveller.

For a complete consideration of Market Trends, Implication for the SH2H initiative, and Strategic recommendations see Section Three. These trends point the direction for a) route definition as ecological travel “experiences”, b) the importance of understanding user profiles, c) potential programs, educational opportunities, and wilderness travel experiences appropriate to each route, and d) the best way to communicate this with the people most likely to respond.

Finally, the proposed marketing and publicity strategy for the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative must work cooperatively with regional, provincial and national destination marketing organizations. A coordinated and integrated approach will magnify overall effectiveness of any individual attempt to profile the natural asset a trail and waterway system offers.

Success in trails marketing has come from effective coordination with existing local promotion, with effective use of promotions in the media, the integration of programmes of events, and in some cases with the development of Friends of Trails, user groups, and groups of people who help maintain the trails.

(B. Lane, 1999)

Both the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Economic Development and Tourism Office (which manages Tourism Shuswap, the region’s destination marketing organization), and the Salmon Arm Economic Development office have committed to sharing in the conception and development of an integrated marketing strategy with the other stakeholders participating in the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative.

The following section considers the Communications component of this Marketing Strategy in more detail.

Integrated Communications Strategy

A recent study of commercial nature-based tourism operators in British Columbia (Tourism BC, 2005), demonstrate the majority of bookings came from repeat guests (39%), marketing efforts (29%), and word of mouth (23%). Of these, the operations that showed above average performance “used more marketing methods (3.6) than businesses in general (3.2).” (p. 21)

While the promotional requirements of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative are broader than just commercial nature-based tourism attraction, the insights from this sector suggest general strategies that will serve the overall promotional needs of the initiative.

The most common communication tools used to promote nature-based leisure experiences were brochures and posters (84%), own websites (77%), direct mail to past customers (54%), consumer tradeshows (52%), links with another website (47%), provincial and territorial travel guides (46%), and magazine ads (45%). (Tourism BC, 2005, p. 22).

Businesses that performed better than average, however, placed greater emphasis on their own websites (91%), links with other websites (60%) and magazine ads (54%). They also placed more emphasis on the use of direct mail to future prospects, public relations, wholesale operators, travel agents, email promotions, newspaper, radio and television ads, and the use of commercial travel guides. (Tourism BC, p. 22) In general, it was noted “above

average businesses were more likely to have used almost all marketing methods than businesses in general.” (TBC, 2005, p. 21)

For small businesses and non-profit organizations, generating the necessary capital to support a comprehensive communications strategy can be daunting. Chris Dadson, President of the Kootenay Rockies Tourism Association, states, “Small businesses have limited resources and therefore can’t market everywhere. They need to be able to target their marketing expenditures on markets that are best suited to their product and on activities that will give them maximum return.” (Chris Dadson, as cited in *A Guide for Tourism Business Entrepreneurs*, Small Business BC, 2006, p. 23)

For the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative this implies the need for:

- a comprehensive promotional communication strategy
- based on specific market segment targets
- utilizing a broad complimentary range of promotional tools
- that leverages the strength of regional partnerships and public relations

Of particular importance will be:

- **The creation of strong print and website promotional pieces**, including mapping and trail use tools
- **Identification and direct communication with potential trail users** (email, mail)
- **Cultivation of a loyal trail community and user base** both locally and non-resident, supported by direct communication tools. Annual events such as the November screening of the Best of the Banff Mountain Film Festival will be particularly important points of contact with core outdoor activity enthusiasts.
- **Identification and alliance with related organizations and associations** (e.g. the International Mountain Bike Association, the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association, the Backcountry Horsemen Society of BC, the Wilderness Tourism Association, Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC, Trails BC, Canada Trails/Go for Green, Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance)
- **Identification and alliance with complementary partners and sponsor** agencies, corporations and endorsements, including development of cross-promotional strategies
- **Targeted links with other websites** with a focus on alliance and sponsor sites
- **Leveraged use of new internet media such as blogs and virtual communities** to promote and expose appropriate sections of the trail system to a wider potential user base, particularly enthusiasts.
- **Targeted use of magazines and online news journals, with a particular focus on leveraging media story coverage** to offset limited funds for advertising. Attention should be given to those magazines with a significant market share within clear enthusiast segments appropriate to the Shuswap Hut and Trail initiative. (e.g. Mountain Biking: data suggests (D. Green, 2003) top read mountain biking magazines include Mountain Bike (with 67% market share), Bike (62%), Dirt Rag (53%) and Mountain Bike Action

(with a smaller 38%). Periodicals with broader enthusiast interest (Explore, Outdoor, Adventurous) should be monitored for readership and similarly targeted for story coverage.

- **Cooperative destination marketing campaigns** with the CSRD Economic Development/Tourism office, regional Chambers of Commerce, Thompson-Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), Adventure Okanagan Cooperative/Bearfoot Canada, Tourism BC, and the Canadian Tourism Commission to leverage exposure through Consumer Trade Shows, Provincial and Territorial Travel Guides, Wholesale Operators, Travel Agents, Commercial Travel Guides, and newspaper, radio and television ads. As well, leverage of exposure potential during the 2010 Winter Olympics is most likely to occur in cooperation with these agencies.

Identity Branding Strategy

What's in a name? Combined – a name together with a singular graphic image can act as an immediate point of association with an intangible experience of value. For the Shuswap Hut and Trail concept, the creation of a bold, memorable and distinct identity can help to unify the many components of the project from trailhead sign to website to sponsorship letterhead. Sometimes called “a brand,” the SH2H might better think of this simple system of name/logo/tagline as a symbol of identity – a single point of contact – the wilderness campfire around which we have gathered and share our stories.

The Goals of an Identity Branding Strategy for the SH2H are:

- to present a consistent and unified image for development, promotion and use of the Shuswap Trail, Huts, and Water trail system
- to clearly link the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance with the Shuswap Trail Concept and Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative
- to unify distinct sub-regional route sections
- to focus provincial, national and international attention and attraction
- to integrate with the 5 Rings Trail branding as a distinct bio-region within the larger hut-to-hut trail system
- to adapt to the following specific uses:
 - merchandise branding to raise revenue
 - signage to clearly identify trails as part of a Shuswap Trail through-route
 - visual promotion – website, correspondence, advertising, flyers, mapping,

Related Titles:

- The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance (SHTA)
- The Shuswap Trail Alliance
- The Shuswap Trail (SH2HT)

- The Shuswap Trail: specific route name (e.g. The Shuswap Trail: Larch Hills Traverse)
- The Shuswap Trail: specific route name/route section or spur trail name (e.g. The Shuswap Trail: Larch Hills Traverse – Mica Section)
- The Shuswap **Water**Trail (SH2H2O)
- The Great Shuswap Trail Circuit
- The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative (SH2H)

Potential Tag Lines:

- to be developed – but should focus on the deeper experience to be encountered in setting out upon any section of the Shuswap Trail and Waterway system and the motivating personal benefit of doing so.

Defining Characteristics:

- memorable
- graphic
- bold
- evoking a sense of:
 - permanence
 - natural encounter
 - historical context
 - physical motion

Other Notes:

- font choice must be part of the branding system
- “attachable” to promotional, merchandise, signage, website (i.e. can stand as a single, distinct graphic element)

Financial Strategy

Core cost centres for the initiative overall are identified as:

- Administration and financial management
- Fundraising, Sponsorships and Investments
- Consultation, planning, route plotting, and approvals
- GIS/mapping services
- Trail and Hut design and construction

- Trail and Hut operation and maintenance
- Marketing, publicity and promotion
- Risk Management

Costing Assumptions

Accurate cost assessments for trail development are difficult to project and vary according to use objectives, terrain, accessibility, and environmental sensitivity.

Project costs have been broken down according to sub-regional route clusters. For each development project three primary cost centres apply: 1) Consultation and planning, 2) Construction, and 3) Operation and Maintenance. Cost estimates for each have been based on existing documentation, qualitative research, and real time tracking of time to task. Both monetary and in-kind resources have been included in order to more accurately demonstrate the overall cost of each trail route.

Planning, construction and operational costs can vary dramatically, however, according to key variables. Increased environmental sensitivity, difficulty of terrain, and density of land ownership increase costs. Intended use also affects cost of construction and maintenance.

Consultation and Planning

The majority of the proposed routes within the Shuswap system are intended to be simple natural single-track trails. They are located primarily on crown land managed under the Province, and are intended for non-motorized recreational use – hike, bike, ski, snowshoe, paddle and equestrian.

While primarily under the governance of the Province, consultation and compliance with the many other stakeholders invested in a particular area of crown land takes time, patience and the willingness of people to be present. This can be time consuming and must be appropriately anticipated and budgeted for. In many ways this assembling of “human geography” is by far the more complex step in the process of trail development and is difficult to assess in advance related to time requirement.

Based on accumulated compliance, approval, stakeholder consultation and application processing over the past 24 months, a calculation of 10% of construction costs has been used when estimating consultation and planning requirements for each route section identified. This includes field explorations, preliminary route plotting and mapping. This figure is likely more accurate where a calculation of \$10/meter or higher is used when calculating construction costs.

Therefore, base costing assumption for Consultation and Planning: 10% of \$10/meter or \$1.00/meter.

Trail Construction

Terrain throughout the Shuswap is mixed forested and inconsistent as far as surface cover is concerned. In some regions, older post-harvest re-growth has left densely packed forest and brush requiring more intensive labour. As well, duff and old timber slash beneath the exposed surface layer of the re-grown forest can be complex with access to mineral soil surfaces harder to reach. Crossing old cut-blocks can also be more time consuming for trail

builders where discarded timber has been left, invasive brush species like wild raspberry are prolific, and where scarification has required complete root mass exposure to battle rot.

Ski, snowshoe and paddle routes tend to require the least expensive costs related to surface impact due to snow pack density. Often simple brushing, blazes and signage is all that is required.

Hike and bike trails require further consideration regarding appropriate tread placement and construction. Class IV and V hiking trails surfaces are the least expensive, requiring less removal of root mass and narrower tread. Well-designed and constructed mountain bike trail requires increased time and labour to ensure smoother surfaces and wider tread width.

Equestrian use sustains the heaviest potential trail impact and often requires additional care related to tread placement and construction. Within many of the Shuswap routes, however, existing forestry tracks already exist allowing for alternate equestrian routes where environmental sensitivity or mineral soil content would not sustain hooves.

Trailheads tend to involve community areas where private landowner proximity increases. These areas, as well as much of the lakeside, involve more extensive individual stakeholder consultation. Front-end consultation and approvals increase in complexity, time, and cost where trails interface with these regions.

Similarly, design and construction costs also increase through the need for services related to trailheads such as garbage and washroom facilities; tread specifications that can hold up to higher use; and special considerations for privacy such as fencing, gates and screening.

Construction costs for trails such as the Salmon Arm foreshore trail (SABNES) and the proposed West Bay Trail require significantly higher per metre costs due to their location along riparian boundaries and environmental requirements. Also, these trails can anticipate higher daily usage by a wide range of people and abilities, including accessibility for people with special needs. Design and construction requirements will include smooth, well-packed surfaces; anticipation for long term, low-maintenance sustainability; and mitigating environmental impacts through techniques such as water permeable tread designs, viewing decks and walkways.

The feasibility study conducted for the West Bay trail found construction costs for this type of higher standard trail ranged between \$30 and \$60/meter, with boardwalk areas costing in excess of \$1300/meter or higher. (C. Nash, 2003) It should be noted, and additional multiplier to compensate for construction cost increases over the past three years should temper these figures. Environmental assessment costs will also need to be considered. (see below)

Trail construction estimates quoted by the Revelstoke Recreation Site Office (K. Gibson as cited by D. Raimbault, July 4, 2005) broke down at:

- \$1.00/m for the layout
- \$1.00/m for the grubbing/cutting trees
- \$3.00/m for the tread
- Total = \$5.00/m

Further discussion with the Revelstoke Cycling Association (R. Mohr, interview, September 2005) built on the MoF estimates. The RCA recently built several “middle of the road” trails. They had volunteers complete the layout and right of way clearing and then contracted out the actual trail bed construction at \$3.50/meter. Using the above MoF estimate figures, per meter cost for trail construction would be around \$5.50/meter, including in-kind work by volunteers. More accurate assessment of volunteer time, however, was not available.

Average trail building time/distance measures were also explored. A review of a nearby mountain bike trail building project on Fly Hills (J. Maybee, meeting, October 23, 2005) suggested a 1.1 kilometre section took 100 people hours to build, for an average of 10 metres/hour. When referenced with the Provincial Recreational Sites and Trails Office, we were told trail build times varied greatly but an average estimate was similar at 10 metres/hour/person. (F. Thiessen, K. Gibson, March 23, 2006)

- The 10m/hour/person average was used to estimate costs for the initial pilot Larch Hills Traverse Project.
- Experience on the Larch Hills Traverse Trail, however, is showing trail build averages of 2.3 metres/hour, at \$15/hr for a total of \$6.60/metre (and this does not include cost of transportation, tools and maintenance, project office overhead, and supervision.)
- A recent volunteer trail building party targeted a 200-meter section hoping for 20 people. Within a six hour period it might be reasonable to assume 4 full productive hours after consideration for training, getting organized, lunch, breaks, and wrap-up. At 20 people x 4 hours, that’s 200 meters divided by 80 individual hours of labor for an average of 2.5 meters/hour/person. Very similar to the JCP pilot trail crew figures.
- Just taking the volunteer trail build scenario: at 2.5 m/hour/person, and valuing that person’s time at \$10/hour (an undervalue), then the labor cost per meter is \$4.00. Add transportation, food, coffee, snacks, tools (estimate a modest \$5.00/person/day), and project coordination (minimum \$200/day), then per meter costs rise to \$5.50/metre. Note: at a value of \$15/hour/person (considered a more reasonable figure for value estimates), this per meter cost rises to \$7.50/meter.
- These figures also need to include signage for the full trail and trailheads. More substantial trailhead developments are considered separately.
- Earlier research estimates suggested per-meter costs ranging from \$10 to \$40/metre depending on the type, location and intended use of the trail.

Therefore, a more accurate average base construction cost for building Type III/IV trails (A. DeBoer, 2003) in the Shuswap (see trail type discussion under Section Five) should be revised to range between \$7 and \$10/metre.

- Where terrain is known to be easier for building, tread construction does not require removal of roots, and intended use is for wilderness hiking on Type IV/V trails (A. DeBoer, 2003) a base cost of \$7.00/meter seems reasonable. In some cases, Type II trails utilizing old roadbeds may only require simple brushing and could be estimated at an even lower estimate.

- Where terrain is unknown or known to be more difficult, tread construction requires more complete grubbing and removal of roots, and intended use is for mixed mountain bike, hike, equestrian use on Type II/III trails (A. DeBoer, 2003), a base cost of \$10.00/meter is reasonable.
- For the next phase of implementation it is recommended these revised construction estimates be applied to a second series of trail building projects with varying terrain and use objectives (e.g. Reinecker Creek, Blind Bay, and Skimikin). These can then be reviewed a second time and revised again for better accuracy in detailed planning and budgeting of subsequent trails.
- For special cases such as the West Bay trail proposal, a completely individual set of costing assumptions must be used.

Operation and Maintenance

The Economic Impact study of the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2004) reviewed industry standards and interviewed experts from other trail systems to estimate annual maintenance costs. Interestingly, the TCT Ontario study determined these annual maintenance costs provided a net advantage to the communities through which trails ran in the form of local expenditures, employment and taxes.

The TCT Ontario study (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2004) found industry standard estimates ranged between 5% and 10% of the original hard construction costs to build the trail. Where a trail required more amenities like paved surfaces and lighting the higher estimates applied. Where the trail was considered “more rural and remote . . . unpaved with fewer amenities” (p. 29), annual maintenance costs of 5% of the hard construction costs applied. (Soft costs including planning, design, and construction administration were not included.)

In a study of a section of the Trans Canada Trail in East-Central Alberta (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2000) found the Province of Alberta based annual trail maintenance costs on 10% of the hard construction costs. The report also noted annual maintenance estimates “typically include a component, or reserve, for long term capital replacement.” The study also noted these annual maintenance costs could often “be reduced through in-kind volunteer labour and donated materials.” (p. 12)

The TCT East-Central Alberta study (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2000) benchmarked the Provincial maintenance estimate of 10% of hard construction costs by reviewing industry standards and other long distance rural trail systems. The report found the Alberta figures to be consistent within the mid-range of annual maintenance costs per kilometer.

These annual costs ranged from \$800 - \$2300/kilometer for earthen trails, and \$1100 to \$11,600/kilometer for paved trails. (p. 13) It should be noted the lower paved trail figure was drawn from La Route Verte budgets in Quebec. Extensive sections of this provincial cycling route system overlap rural road infrastructure.

The study section of trail considered in the Alberta study (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2000) estimated an annual maintenance cost of \$1,955/kilometer for the 303-kilometer route. Construction costs were estimated at about \$21/meter. (PWC, 2000, Construction Budget Estimates, p. 4)

For the majority of trail proposed under the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative, the “rural and remote, unpaved” trail maintenance estimate (PWC, 2003) of 5% would seem most applicable. It should be understood this estimate includes in-kind valuing of volunteer labour and material contributions.

Environmental Assessment

Finally – areas where gaps in knowledge and environmental understanding create uncertainty as to the affect of human recreational travel on the surrounding natural habitat will require additional cost considerations.

The Environmental Services Unit of the Federal Public Works and Government Services Canada (K. Menzies, correspondence, April 22, 2006) identifies four base levels of Environmental Assessment Screening and related costs:

- **Basic Screening** – for those sites with minimal or no environmental concern, and no consultation with other Federal departments is needed. Require an assessment based on existing material available as a “desk exercise.” Report: 2 – 5 pages long. Cost: within administrative scope of public employees.
- **Small Complexity Screening** – for sites where a good knowledge of the environment is required to determine potential impacts, and some consultation with other government and non-governmental organizations for information may be needed, but other departments with “Responsible Authority” for the site are unlikely. Report: 10 – 25 pages. Cost: up to \$5,000.
- **Medium Complexity Screening** – for sites where a good knowledge of the environment is required to determine potential impacts, and consultation with various other government and non-governmental organizations for information will be needed, and other departments with “Responsible Authority” for the site are likely and will need to issue permits. Information or consultation with the public may be required. Report: usually more than 25 pages. Cost: \$5,000 - \$20,000.
- **Complex Screening** - for sites where a good knowledge of the environment is required to determine potential impacts, and consultation with various other government and non-governmental organizations for information will be needed, and other departments with “Responsible Authority” for the site are likely and will need to issue permits. Information or consultation with the public will most likely be required. Report: comprehensive study. Cost: greater than \$20,000.

(Public Works and Government Services Canada)

The Anstey Highland Route, for example, will require further environmental assessment and management strategies developed based on this assessment prior to proceeding with any route development. Based on preliminary field explorations, public feedback, input from winter tourism operators in the region, LRMP zoning, and current habitat studies (Mountain Caribou) a complex screening will most likely be required. The same is true of the proposed extension of estuary trails within the Salmon Arm Bay route area.

In many of the other route areas, trail corridors are designated within existing timber harvest zones. Habitat impact concerns are focused more specifically on riparian and watershed features and sensitive habitat zones. For those features where a basic screening utilizing existing knowledge is deemed insufficient, small complexity screenings will most likely be required.

Water Trail

Primary consideration for Water Trail planning, construction and operational costs will need to be based on pull out access facilities, water accessible hut facilities, and signage. Further planning and budget assessment is required specific to this route proposal. Several related cost assumptions, however, can be applied. These include planning, construction and maintenance costs related to intensive use sites including trailheads, campsites and hut locations.

Trailheads

As per the discussion of trailheads in Section Five, each trailhead will have variable cost requirements for development. The basic requirements will include a) a trailhead signage, b) trail design/construction to ensure appropriate filtering for intended trail use (dog leg turns, gateway anchors such as rocks and trees, fencing, gates, and stiles), and c) appropriate amenities to handle expected use (parking, garbage, and toilet facilities).

The East-Central Alberta Trans Canada Trail study (PWC, 2000) provides detailed budget estimates for major trail construction requirements, including trailhead and campsite developments. Per site estimates for Trailhead/Campsite development along the study section of trail were as follows:

Trailhead/Campsite Development – including trailhead map/info board, 10 stall gravel parking lot, +/- 10 campsites = \$12,500 each

Toilet Buildings (1 per gender) = \$800 x 2 = \$1600

Water Pumps/Standpipe (varies according to available water source) = \$1000

(PWC, 2000, Construction Budget Estimate, pp. 1, 2)

The most recent South Canoe trailhead proposal connecting Salmon Arm with the Larch Hills Traverse trail under the SH2H initiative has been budgeted at \$10,000 for hike/bike only, or \$14,000 for equestrian use included as well (variations based on bridging costs.) This includes trailhead signage, addition of toilets next to the existing parking area, trail tread preparation, stringer deck bridge span over east Canoe Creek, and fencing, gates and signage to direct users and mitigate trespass and negative impact to nearby residents and agricultural irrigation.

For purposes of construction cost estimates the following is proposed: (Further costing research is recommended, however, for specific projects.)

- Simple trailhead (sign only) = \$ 250.00 (includes ½ day labour)
- Enhanced simple (sign + outhouse) = \$ 1150.00
- Basic trailhead (sign, parking, outhouse) = \$ 3150.00 (\$2000 for grading)
- Comprehensive trailhead (full amenities) = \$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00

Huts

For costing purposes, cabin package costs were researched. The base material cost for a rustic hut, suitable for 8 to 12 people has been established at \$50,000. (1500 square feet, including loft.) Approximate costs for completed

construction including material/labour ranged between \$57 and \$108/square foot for a completed cabin package (NorPine, quote, February 14, 2006) \$60/square foot would complete the 1500 square foot rustic cabin at a total of \$101,700 (with taxes).

The Alpine Club of Canada's recently re-constructed Fay Hut cost an estimated \$240,000. (M. Macullo, 2005) A significant portion of these funds were used for helicopter transport of materials to the cabin site. Over 100 volunteers contributed to the construction over two week long work camps, and all of the money for the project was donated or grant based.

Alternate structures were explored, including Yurts (modelled after portable circular hide tents of Mongolia.) Base cost for a 28 foot Yurt was \$12,338, with about \$3000 to \$5000 of additions needed. (Yurtco, February 28, 2005)

Bigfoot Log Homes and Lake Country Log Homes have both expressed interest in contributing to the design and construction of suitable cabin facilities. No formal costing has been established at this time, but it is the desire of the SH2H to seek local involvement in the design and manufacture of huts. follow-up discussions are underway.

For the purposes of preliminary cost estimates, we have valued materials and construction (including transportation) of a 12-person hut at \$100,000. A more detailed budgeting analysis will need to be conducted as specific hut sites and designs are created.

Marketing

For the purposes of the costing exercise we have used a target annual marketing goal of 10% of total operating/development costs. A more accurate budget needs to be developed based on specific marketing objectives.

Budget Scenarios

Trail Development, Construction, Operating Estimates

Based on these assumptions, the following table demonstrates a conservative preliminary estimate for trail development, construction, and operating costs in each of the identified trail sub-regions.

Figure 2: Budget Costing by Trail Route

Trail Routes	Target Km's	Consultation and Planning (10% of cost)	Construction (\$7 - \$10/m)	Operation and Maintenance (5% of cost)/yr
Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Trail	90+	\$63,000 – \$90,000	\$630,000 – \$900,000	\$31,500 - \$45,000/yr
The Anstey Highland Route	80+	\$56,000 – \$80,000	\$560,000 – \$800,000	\$28,000 - \$40,000/yr
The Inner Shuswap Trail Route	35+	\$24,500 – \$35,000	\$245,000 – \$350,000	\$12,250 - \$17,500/yr
The Larch Hills Traverse	40+	\$28,000 – \$40,000	\$280,000 – \$400,000	\$14,000 - \$20,000/yr
The Skimikin Connection	35+	\$24,500 – \$35,000	\$245,000 – \$350,000	\$12,250 - \$17,500/yr
The Salmon Arm Bay (Does not include West Bay Trail & Salmon River crossing)	40+	\$28,000 – \$40,000	\$280,000 – \$400,000	\$14,000 - \$20,000/yr
TOTALS	320+	\$224,000 – \$320,000	\$2,240,000 – \$3,200,000	\$112,000 - \$160,000/yr

Development Investment by Annual Targets 2006 - 2010

The following budget scenario is based on the 5 year strategic planning objectives outlined at the beginning of this section and would see:

- the development of 250 kilometers of trail by 2010
- the first 5 day hut-to-hut route established
- an integrated marketing strategy in place

Preliminary targets are based on trail sections within the proposed SH2H route system that can be built as single track Type III/IV (See Whistler Standards, A. DeBoer, 2003) at an average estimate of \$8.50/meter over the next 5-year period, plus 10% estimate for consultation and planning. Cumulative maintenance costs at 5% are shown in 2010.

Figure 3: Budget Costing by Annual Strategic Objectives

Annual Objectives: 2006 – 2010		
2006	Trail Development: 40 km <input type="checkbox"/> The Larch Hills Traverse <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced route plotting continues	\$ 374,000
	Hut Development: continue consultation and research	
	Marketing: begin integrated planning with region and province	
2007	Trail Development: 70 km <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Larch Hills Traverse <input type="checkbox"/> Inner Shuswap: Reinecker Creek/White Lake/Blind Bay <input type="checkbox"/> Skimikin Connection <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced route plotting: Anstey & North Shuswap	\$ 621,500
	Hut Development: pilot hut site initiated	\$100,000
	Marketing: Provincial awareness/local promotional guide	\$10,000
2008	Trail Development: 70 km <input type="checkbox"/> Anstey Highland Route <input type="checkbox"/> Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced route plotting: Anstey & North Shuswap <input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects: West Bay Trail & Shuswap Water Trail	\$ 621,500
	Hut Development: 2 new hut sites	\$200,000
	Marketing: National awareness/Trailhead Destination Operators/Inn-to-Inn Routes	\$20,000

2009	Trail Development: 70 km <input type="checkbox"/> Anstey Highland Route <input type="checkbox"/> Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route	\$ 621,500
	Hut Development: 5 day hut-to-hut route established	\$200,000
	Marketing: International awareness/experiential program and business development	\$30,000
2010	5 – 10 year management strategy implementation:	0
	Advanced Trail Development: 20 km	\$ 170,000
	Advanced Hut Development: 2 nd Five Hut section	\$100,000
	Operation and Maintenance: 250 km trail system + 5 huts	\$156,250
	Marketing: International/Winter 2010/Hut-to-Hut Route	\$40,000
Total Investment Value		\$3,264,750.00

For an extended Phase 2 breakdown of planning goals, target objectives, and planning timeline, see Appendix.

Financial Revenue Strategy

Section Updated: January 2007

Core to the long-term viability and success of the proposed Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative is the ability to identify sound revenue generators supporting the work of the Alliance. The Constitution of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance (Appendix) states within its constitution the following goals:

- To plan for long-term management and maintenance of trail routes and huts based on sound business practices, identifiable revenue sources, and the calculation of natural capital⁶ assets in the bottom-line of sustainable operations (SHTA, 2005, 2.d)
- To accept, acquire, and raise resources (financial, material and labour) for trail, waterway and hut development and management projects throughout the region (SHTA, 2005, 2.e)

Sound business practices, identifiable revenue sources, and the challenge to include ecosystems in our bottom line assessment of activity demand a leveraged approach to funding and ongoing revenue. While traditional fundraising avenues and in-kind volunteer investment should make a core segment of the SH2H revenue, it cannot be the dependant source. The scope of the initiative will demand a more complex leveraged approach drawing on multiple sources of financial, social and material capital. A snapshot demonstrating what a leveraged capital investment strategy might look like is presented based on work with core stakeholders over the past 24 months.

Revenue Investment Sources

⁶ Natural Capital refers to an emerging approach in business that includes "ecosystem services" on the economic balance sheet. It is a concept gaining recognition as companies discover that making resources more productive not only increases ecological protection but can also improve profitability and competitiveness. See *A Road Map for Natural Capitalism*, by Amory Lovins, L. Hunter Lovins, and Paul Hawken. The Harvard Business Review, May-June 1999.

A review of other hut and trail systems, survey of recreational resource strategies, and consultation with regional leadership present the following broad revenue sources deemed potentially significant for the Shuswap Trail Alliance. These include:

- **In-kind and volunteer partnerships** – deserving of honourable first mention in the significant list of Shuswap Trail Alliance capital assets, volunteer and in-kind human resource capital has provided the backbone to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative. At its heart, the SH2H is a community led phenomenon demonstrating commitment, passion and belief in the natural landscape in which we live. It is the core of the adventure. Recommendations like adopt-a-trail strategies, volunteer hut custodians, and the enthusiasm to see trail building parties become regular features speak to the remarkable spirit of engagement the SH2H has been privileged to receive.
- **Traditional fundraising** – The nature of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance as a multi-stakeholder organization means most of the organizations involved must depend on similar fundraising efforts. While an important source of building social capital amongst alliance members, dependence on fundraising events must not infringe on the existing revenue share of other partner members and stakeholders. As well, the significant expenditure of human resource capital that goes into many fundraising efforts does not always match the financial return on investment. Where a modest fundraising event can double as an investment in building community relationship, broadening awareness and maintaining community investment in the project the expenditure of time can be considered reasonable in terms of social capital return. In many ways the SHTA is better positioned to act as a body that can help to support and increase fundraising revenue to the other participating member stakeholders.
- **Capital Development Endowment Fund** – creation of an endowment fund warrants consideration. The 10th Mountain Hut Division in Colorado (J. Ayotte, 2005) utilizes a separate endowment fund for all capital developments. This allows the 10th Mountain Division to access larger investments for capital construction projects, and to maintain the huts “as property managers.” (J. Ayotte, 2005, p. 10) The endowment also provides arms length protection from the day-to-day operations of the Hut-to-Hut system sheltering the fund from potential target by legal suits. Ben Dodge of the 10th Mountain Division Huts observed they spent \$150,000 in 2004 on capital costs (hut repairs, new roofs), “it would be considerably difficult to have secured this amount through fundraising. . .instead we approach the endowment fund board with a proposal. . .list of needs, priorities and a budget.” (as cited by J. Ayotte, 2005, p. 10) Several conversations with members of the Shuswap Community Foundation have included speculation about the possible set-up of a trails fund within their structure.
- **Sponsoring Endorsements** – feedback from the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area C Parks plan suggested favourable support for commercial sponsorship to support park infrastructure. (R. Beardmore, D. Kaegi, and R. Rollins, 2003) Preliminary tools to promote Sponsoring Partnerships have been constructed. Further work is required to identify appropriate Return on Investment (ROI) for sponsorship including parameters for Title sponsorships within the multiple trails and huts proposed. Sponsorship reach

does not need to limit to local regional companies, but can use the advantage of the wider promotional opportunity the proposed trail and waterway system can offer.

- **Overnight fees** – calculation of revenue is based on direct single bed nights within huts. This presents one of the foundational arguments in favour of establishing two or three hut-to-hut sections within the overall system. Intensive use hut sites concentrate use creating sufficient demand to maintain the resource.

Initial costing would suggest Rustic Huts used by independent self-sufficient travelers that maintained at least 60% bookings during the primary season of use would be able to cover their maintenance expenses (10% of construction costs annually) within a fee schedule similar to those set by the Alpine Club of Canada (\$22 - \$26/night) or the 10th Mountain Division (\$26 U.S./night).

Many of the huts within the province, however, charge considerably lower fees (Columbia Valley Hut Society at \$10/night; Lower fees would need to be offset by volunteer custodian/host support donated as in-kind volunteer revenue or through self-maintained facilities. Part of the small surplus in both revenue and/or in-kind volunteer time could be directed at monitoring and maintaining trails in proximity of the hut. Guided groups, especially fully catered trips, would generate a more substantial revenue, enabling a wider impact of financial and in-kind capital.

- **Alliance Memberships** – at the current membership fee schedule of \$20/individual and \$50/corporate, this will never be a substantial source of revenue for the trail systems. However, membership drives provide a tangible starting point to create belonging and inspire deepening commitment to a cause. The Shuswap Trail Alliance memberships should be viewed in this light – as a vehicle for belonging, asserting commitment to the initiative, and as an opportunity to invite further commitments of time, knowledge, services and resources.

Incentive strategies should be considered. The Alpine Club of Canada provides a facilities upgrade to annual memberships, allowing booking of huts up to 1 year in advance. Regular members can book 60 days in advance, and non-members are given final booking at 30 days in advance. For popular hut sites, this can be a significant incentive to maintain and upgrade membership.

Some room exists to leverage wider corporate memberships, but would likely be tied to similar guidelines as with sponsors. Several corporate membership applicants have commented that the Shuswap Trail Alliance fees could be increased. The 10th Mountain Division scales their memberships between \$25 and \$1000. (J. Ayotte, 2005, p. 9)

- **Trail use fees and passes** – this option, while recommended frequently, does not initially appear to suggest high return on investment from the Alliance. While the Larch Hills Nordic Society and the regions Snowmobile Clubs have reasonably good success with their honorary and annual trail pass system, It can be argued the value of regular snow grooming is easier to recognize and choose to pay for on a user fee basis. A different ethos surrounds hiking and mountain biking on crown land. Suggesting one should pay

for use on public crown land is likely to meet with low compliance. Recent experience with introduced fee boxes in the B.C. Provincial Parks would suggest this is an issue.

Where clear jurisdiction over the land is perceived trail use fees will be more easily implemented – for example, on Indian band territory as in the case of Little Shuswap Indian Band, Quaaout Lodge and the newly developed mountain bike trails. Use of these trails are administered by the privately operated Kamloops Mountain Bike Camps at fees ranging between \$65/day to \$1600 per week for a full package. (M. Scott, 2006) Where trails begin on First Nations band territory, opportunity to build complete visitor packages becomes easier.

For the purposes of Shuswap Trails on crown land, integration within the local trail systems is a key objective. Access for all has also been identified as a core value with the public interest a priority. The use of trail use fees does not appear compatible with this partnered approach.

Having said this, however, the results from the public interest survey were perplexing. When asked if they would pay trail user fees to support ongoing maintenance, 71% of respondents said yes, with a significant 23% saying “it depends.” (SHTA, 2006, p. 8) These responses would suggest a creative approach to trail user fees – perhaps packaged as a kind of merchandisable annual “must have” t-shirt or other outdoor clothing accessory – may hold potential.

- **Merchandise and Official Product Sponsors** – Outdoor recreational enthusiasts enjoy both the individual joy of being immersed in the landscape, and the satisfaction of belonging to a common active community. Labelled clothing and related merchandise creates both identity, status, and belonging, and may help to provide additional income for specific projects conducted by the Trail Alliance. In particular, sponsorship endorsement from appropriate product suppliers may provide additional investment revenue in return for promotional exposure. It is recommended product sponsor priority be given to companies who demonstrate social and environmental commitment, product excellence that matches the trail based activities of the SH2H, and when ever possible be Canadian based companies.
- **Municipal Tax Based Contributions** – local residents of the Shuswap already make annual tax commitments to developing and maintaining natural greenways through the growing CSRD Parks Commissions and the municipal greenway committees. No further implications are considered from the Shuswap Trail Alliance perspective. It is the goal of the Alliance to creat a cooperative forum that can leverage new funds by demonstrating already committed resources. In 2005 alone, the City of Salmon Arm leveraged \$798,366 toward trail infrastructure projects. (C. Bannister, correspondence, March 1, 2006)
- **Proposed Hotel Tax** – the Salmon Arm Hotel Association recently proposed a municipal hotel tax within the City of Salmon Arm. If successful, the association has committed 20% of the tax revenues to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance. With growth, it is anticipated this tax could amount to around \$20,000 annually. Anticipated use of the tax includes annual marketing and trail related communication tools such

as regularly updated maps, guides and signage providing return on investment for both the accommodation operators of Salmon Arm and visitors.

- **Private Land Development** – a significant source of greenway investment is being contributed by private land developers. Commitments to establish greenway alignments linked to longer routes within new development has demonstrated a substantial on-the-ground commitment to greenways in the region. Of note is the District of Sicamous where five separate landowners have expressed willingness to integrate paths and bike ways to extended regional trails. These commitments will likely exceed \$350,000 to \$450,000.
- **Leveraged Grant Applications** – In the last meeting with local MLA, the Honorable George Abbot, provincial grant investment sources were discussed. (G. Abbott, meeting, November 28, 2005) Minister Abbot recommended working to demonstrate current commitment from regional endorsing stakeholders supporting the Trail initiative in order to consider leveraged funding options. Combining municipal, regional district and private development commitments to trails, signage, trailhead and supporting infrastructure, it is estimated between \$2 and \$5 million dollars in direct trail investments can be demonstrated in the Shuswap region. Several matching grant funds are now pending, with follow-up meetings to be scheduled with Minister Abbot.
- **Tenure Management** – early conversations with the Provincial land resource ministries have wondered aloud about the potential for a new kind of management agreement given the scope of trail planning proposed by the Shuswap Trail Alliance. By creating a comprehensive trail based management resource, new opportunities for partnered land tenure agreements may be possible. This requires further exploration with the regional Integrated Land Management Bureau.
- **Private Investment Opportunities** – Again, interviews with the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association opened the possibility for private/public partnerships. Of the 29 backcountry huts managed by the 10th Mountain Division, 15 are privately owned. The 10th Mountain Division manages all bookings and establishes the policies and standards under which privately owned huts must operate. This has created an opportunity to extend the resource reach of the Association while still retaining overall management responsibility and direction for the nature and values of backcountry experiences.

Within the Shuswap there is potential for this kind of opportunity, particularly where the Trail Alliance has established recreational management objectives within trail and hut site tenure. It should be noted, this potential received both enthusiastic support and caution during consultation. While suggesting significant potential, further work is needed to define the parameters of such a relationship, and to see if it would merit private investment. Certainly the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (M. Chisholm et al., 2002) assessed “locally-owned and operated cabin-to-cabin product would likely fit well within the local economic development plans of the communities in the area.” (p. 123)

- **Educational & Guided Programs** – Several hut based trail systems have developed substantial environmental, outdoor activity skill, and natural science programs within their operations. The

Appalachian Mountain Club operates a substantial program within their system of huts in the White Mountain section of the Appalachian Trail. Similarly, the Alpine Club of Canada has forged a reputation for mountaineering programs, and the Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association (J. Ayotte, 2005) has founded their entire hut-to-hut trail concept on educational goals aimed at environmental awareness.

Potential exists to extend the ecology, lifestyle, physical health and natural encounter mandate of the Alliance. Program delivery partnerships may be viable with local professional guides, eco-tourism operators, naturalists, Okanagan College and Thompson Rivers University, Haney Heritage House, the Switzmalph Cultural Centre, local accommodation operators, and others.

With this in mind, start up support for non-profit organizations considering social enterprise business ventures are available now available. (enp, 2005) Initial conversations considering the potential for integrating experiential education opportunities into a cabin-to-cabin experience in the Larch Hills suggested some potential. A limited population base, however, may temper short haul overnight use. Longer destination retreats may be a more sustainable program venture. Further discussion with retreat and program centres in the region may also present new opportunities for multi-day nature based educational experiences.

- **Special Events and Tournaments** – trail based adventure and sporting events that rely on trail infrastructure hold opportunity for partnerships. Reciprocal arrangements would link trail development, maintenance, and marketing value to the event, the host, sponsors, and stewardship organizations. These might be both financial and/or in-kind contribution agreements.

A good example is the Salty Dog Enduro Mountain Bike Race hosted each spring by Skookum Cycle and Ski on the South Canoe Trail System east of Salmon Arm. This event includes an annual trail clean-up sponsored by Skookum each spring, and funding received by Skookum from the BC Cycle Association for trail work has been donated to the Trail Alliance to support ongoing care for the South Canoe trails.

Other regional trail based events that provide return to the host stewardship organizations include the annual Larch Hills Reino Keski-Salmi Loppet, and several equestrian events sponsored by both the EQ Trails Association and the BC Backcountry Horsemen. Potential new events might include Rogaine and Orienteering, GeoCaching challenges, cross-country mountain bike challenges, adventure racing, trail running.

As well, complimentary event packaging and promotion should be considered with events where cross over markets exist. Examples include cultural, arts, music, and heritage events.

- **Research Projects** – the proposed SH2H trail and waterway system, in looking closely to the landscape for direction in planning a regional natural trail route, has encountered areas that would warrant further study and research, including limits in the data specific to non-motorized hike, bike, ski, paddle and equestrian recreational impacts on wildlife habitat. Much of the existing data clusters motorized and non-

motorized activities together. Additional research and advocacy is needed along the length of the Shuswap Water Trail, especially the upper Shuswap, in order to set appropriate recreational objectives. Granting sources such as the Forest Investment Account as well as research projects conducted in partnership with the University's are potential sources of related investment funding.

- **Trailhead Destination Accommodations and Special Packages** – the Trailhead Destination concept is discussed earlier in this report. Again, the opportunity is presented for mutually beneficial partnerships between regional partners and the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance as designate trailhead hosts. In return for leveraged marketing and promotional exposure, in-kind services related to trailhead upkeep, monitoring, maintenance, hospitality and information services might be exchanged.

As well, the Alliance can play a role in helping to assemble special packaged trail based experiences including point-to-point or “Inn-to-Inn” travel. The centralized online booking system would play an important role in both promotion and packaging ready for the provincial, national, and conceivably, international travel market place.

- **Cooperative Marketing Programs** – again, partnerships win the day here. Together with the CSRD Tourism Office and provincial Destination Marketing Organizations, accommodation operators, guides, related service providers, and local communities are able to partner cooperatively around trail based promotional opportunities.

Revenue Investment Conclusions

The 19 revenue sources identified above demonstrate the potential for leveraged investment in the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative. Assembly of specific tools to advance investment funding is underway, with follow-up meetings being scheduled to move grant applications forward, explore sponsoring partnerships, and stage a community “awareness” fundraising event in February.

Investment Commitments To Date

Substantial regional commitment to developing natural non-motorized trails has been demonstrated. This includes both in-kind and financial commitments to trail development totalling \$200,025.00 of direct investment to the SH2H Initiative, and \$2,442,869.00 of regional stakeholder commitments. Combined this totals a net investment in trail development of \$2,642,894.00 from individuals and stakeholder organizations within the Shuswap.

The following tables illustrate these investments a) to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative since January 2005, and b) from regional stakeholders to extended trail network infrastructure.

Figure 4: Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative investment since January 2005

Income	Finance	In-Kind	Notes
Contributions/Commitments To Date. . . Jan. 2005 – Nov. 2006			
CSRD Area E Economic Opportunity Fund	\$ 4,080	0	Contributed Aug 05
Western Economic Diversification	\$ 10,000	0	Contributed Sept 05
Services Canada JCP Trail Crew Project 2006	\$ 80,000	0	Value to Project

Shuswap Trail Alliance Memberships	\$ 2,300	0	as of Sept 30, 2006
Community Futures Development Corp of the Shuswap		\$ 6,000	In-Kind Admin/AV
Len Sept Signs		\$ 500	Committed Feb 06
Ken Anderson/Shuswap Excavating		\$ 1,000	Committed Mar 06
Project Coordination		\$ 35,000	to Aug 25/06
Project Research/Assistance*		\$ 3,110	to Oct 30/06
Route Development*		\$ 31,000	to Aug 30/06
GIS/Mapping Services*		\$ 3,460	to May 31/06
Website Development & Hosting		\$ 200	Site host/register: Jan – Oct, 2006
Tourism Operator's Interest Survey		\$ 1,200	G. Casselman consult
Trail Crew Construction Equipment		\$ 4,000	Sicamous Chamber
Trail Crew Construction Equipment*		\$ 1,000	Salmon Arm Ec. Dev.
Steering Advisory		\$ 9,500	@\$250/day equivalent
Draw Prizes		\$ 60	Skookum Cycle&Ski
Trade Show Booth (Home & Garden Show)		\$ 500	SA Chamber
Festival Show Booth (Roots and Blues Festival)		\$ 200	SA Folk Music Society
Display Materials/Construction		\$ 85	Luminous
Display Tent, 3-D topo display, hand out materials		\$ 600	Skookum/SABNES/CFDC x 2 event
Meeting Facilities		\$ 1000	OK College Annual
Computer Equipment/Camera		\$ 700	D. Leatherdale & Assc.
Air Survey Services*		0	J. Hall/M. Fredlund
Environmental Consultation		\$ 200	B. Grainger
Identity Design (Logo)/ Colette St Amour		\$ 1400	40 hours @ \$35/hr
Canadian Photoscene 2007 Calendar*		\$ 2,000	Promotional Value
Fall Hiking Series: admin./publicity/insurance		\$ 300	Shuswap Hospice Society
Additional Volunteer Contributions		\$ 630	Trail Log Hours @ \$15/hr
		0	
		0	
Total Investment To Date*	\$ 96,380	\$103,645	
TOTAL VALUE		\$ 200,025	

*Amount to be confirmed.

Figure 5: Regional Stakeholder Commitments To Date

Regional Trail Investments: Route Link Partners			
CSRD Regional Trail Development*	\$		Pending
City of Salmon Arm Trails (1997 – 2005)	\$1,574,443		Confirmed
City of Salmon Arm Trails (2006 – 2010)	\$ 111,126		Projected
District of Sicamous Waterfront Trails*	\$ 12,300		Waterfront Walkway \$ Pending
Salmon Arm Hotel Accommodation Association	\$ 20,000		20% Hotel Tax annual commitment
Larch Hills Nordic/Shuswap Outdoors Trails*	0		
Backcountry Horsemen Society of B.C.*	0		
Bayview Developments	\$ 325,000		Confirmed
Old Town Bay*	\$ 400,000		

Hyde Mountain Golf Resort	0		
Regal Resorts*	0		
Total Investment*	\$2,442,869		

*Amount to be confirmed.

Hut Revenue Break Even Fees

A hut facility with accommodation for 12 people, averaging 60% capacity (based on 10th Mountain Division, J. Ayotte, 2005) during the main season of use July – early October

Therefore, based on an average of 7 people /night:

At \$10/person/night x 7 for 100 nights = \$7000 total annual revenue/hut

At \$15/person/night x 7 for 100 nights = \$10,500

At \$20/person/night x 7 for 100 nights = \$14,000

At \$22/person/night x 7 for 100 nights = \$15,400

At \$25/person/night x 7 for 100 nights = \$17,500

If a hut costs \$75,000 to build, and maintenance is 10% of construction costs/annually. . .

. . .then, annual hut maintenance will cost \$7500/hut.

Therefore, breakeven per person nightly fee is \$11/night.

- Based on a medium between current Alpine Club of Canada rates (\$ 22/night) and Columbia Valley Hut Society Rates (\$10/night), and given the design objectives of the Shuswap Huts, including some private “retreat cells”, possible rate margins could range from \$15 to \$25/night.
- Hut custodian fees could be covered by options for simple catered breakfast/bag lunch/dinner packages, and fully catered programs.
- Benchmark annual targets calculated for the 5 Rings Trail Strategy estimated annual hut accommodation revenues at \$21,060/hut based on \$30 per night. (D. Elzer, 2005)

Insurance and Liability

Background research on insurance and liability needs for the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance have been gathered and need to be documented. Of note, Trails BC found that where trails were enforced non-motorized their insurance costs were around \$1/kilometre, with allowance for snowmobile use in winter premiums jumped to about \$6/kilometre, but with full ATV access premiums rocketed to about \$26/kilometre. (M. Shewchuk, interview, June 13, 2005) They were able to bring the overall premiums down by having all the municipalities along the Trans Canada Trail route co-sign their insurance to jointly cover. Coverage through Capri came to around \$6500.

The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance has had Barton Insurance (J. Beevor-Potts, Oct. 17, 2006) quote on liability coverage. Premiums were \$3500 for \$2 million, and \$3845 for \$3 million coverage.

The SH2H will now advance to the next level of provincial ministry approval for trails currently under development. Under the next level of approval trails become designated as a resource within the Provincial crown land resource. Under a management agreement with the Province, the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance would manage the trail, but Provincial insurance would cover use.

Further reporting will be assembled to present further implications for management, private landowner agreements, and special considerations for higher risk activities such as free ride mountain biking.

Section Eight: 2007 Recommendations for Implementation

Based on an overall favourable assessment of the value, benefits and viability of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway concept, the following actions are recommended for further implementation:

1. **Secure funding to hire a full time project manager, or part-time manager and assistant:** as outlined in the HR Capacity discussion paper and the Strategic Direction set by the Shuswap Trail Alliance. Viability and delivery of the Shuswap Hut and Trail concept will depend on consistent and proactive leadership. The scope of the vision and corresponding work is well beyond reasonable volunteer capacity.
2. **Initiate the “Connect the Shuswap” sponsor investment campaign:** These include a five-year series of development objectives, and base project costing. The pieces needed to conduct a full fundraising campaign are ready. Draft sponsorship materials have been developed and circulated. Assembling regional resource commitments is an essential step to accessing matching investment from provincial and federal sources.
3. **Initiate a dedicated consultation in the North Shuswap and Seymour Arm (Area F):** Consultation in these areas proved more difficult and will benefit from a second round of dedicated effort similar to that conducted in Area E/Sicamous. Contacts: Denis Delisle, Jim Cooperman, Nicholas Mitra, North Shuswap Chamber of Commerce, North Shuswap Naturalists, Andreas Artz of the Little Shuswap Indian Band, and the Seymour Arm Community Association.
4. **Prepare a documented business strategy using the Enterprising Non-Profits guidelines:** the background research, consultation data and strategic options have been gathered through the Phase 1 consultation. Project development will benefit from the preparation of a formal business plan. The Enterprising Non-Profits guidelines and funding options provide non-profit organizations like the Shuswap Hut and Trail Initiative with the resources to develop successful long-term strategies.
5. **Prepare a written brief demonstrating how the trail initiative benefits and addresses First Nation’s interests** for follow-up with the Chiefs and Councils of the four Indian Bands in the Shuswap watershed. Goal: increase First Nation’s participation and direction within the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance.
6. **Initiate an environmental assessment strategy for the Queest/Anstey Highland route, and establish appropriate recreational objectives for the region:** This proposed route way within the Shuswap trail system would be designated “alpine backcountry touring” suitable for experienced wilderness travellers. It has been recommended the only constructed trail segments be initial trailhead access points including clear signage indicating limits of use, dangers, required experience and preparedness. Route marks would include Cairns and blazes requiring route-finding experience or the accompaniment of an experienced guide. Due to the significant wildlife habitat of the area, these objectives along with questions of appropriate user numbers, suitability of hut locations, guidelines for

safety and other issues related to potential habitat impact need to be considered within a dedicated environmental assessment strategy.

7. **Initiate JCP negotiations with Services Canada immediately** in anticipation of a second trail crew project to begin spring 2007. Services Canada has indicated a desire to apply the resources invested in this year's pilot trail crew project towards projects over the next two to three years.
8. **Advance trail plotting, mapping and Section 57 application (Fall/Winter 2006)** in anticipation of a spring 2007 trail crew. Options at this point appear to be sections in the Reinecker Creek to Blind Bay route with the CSRD and Inner Shuswap trail cluster, Skimikin to Squilax extensions with the Shuswap Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of BC, and Lee Creek Bluffs in the North Shuswap with area landowners, the CSRD and the Little Shuswap Indian Band.
9. **Extend contact beyond the Shuswap region** with provincial, regional, and municipal organizations and governing bodies to begin assembling an Okanagan/Shuswap trails identity, development, promotion and marketing strategy.

Appendix and Attachments

Appendix A: Opportunities/Challenges (SWOT) Analysis

The following SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis related to the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterways concept is expanded from an initial SWOT created for the Shuswap Tourism Opportunity Strategy (2002, p.115). Additional points are drawn from Phase 1 secondary and primary research including the Tourism Operators Interest Survey, the Public Interest Survey, qualitative public input through interviews and information displays, and field surveys.

<p>Strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Shuswap and Mabel Lakes provide ideal backdrops to floating cabins. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Supportive features and corresponding activities including rock climbing, river activities, kayaking, ski touring, snowmobiling, etc. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Good mix of front, mid and backcountry. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Proximity to population/ transportation centers. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Proximity to high-quality outdoor recreation features. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Evidence of expanding inter-provincial and international interest in hut-to-hut travel experiences. ❑ Strong liaison with Adventure Okanagan Cooperative's proposed 5 Rings Trail strategy ❑ Current provincial interest in natural trail resources (linked with 2010) ❑ Significant qualitative public support/desire for better non-motorized trail system demonstrated ❑ Demonstrated willingness of regional stakeholders to work together through the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance ❑ Consistent provincial support from MLA and land management agencies ❑ Active support from MTSA Recreational Sites and Trails Officer ❑ Strong advocacy/volunteer steering group sustained over two years ❑ Widespread regional agency/governance stakeholder support ❑ Substantial knowledge base exists, including resource contacts ❑ Business support from hospitality, tourism, retail and service sector ❑ Tourism Operators Interest Survey suggests high support for concept ❑ Significant regional capital investment for trails already committed
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Capital investment in trails includes substantial support/investment from new land developers (especially Sicamous District) ❑ Commitment of 20% of proposed Salmon Arm hotel tax to trail initiative ❑ Services Canada JCP Pilot Trail project running – interest in 3-4 years ❑ Proactive First Nations involvement/support through Little Shuswap Indian Band Aboriginal Interest Department and Switzmalph Cultural Centre ❑ Landowner’s proactively seeking to support trailhead access (in some areas) ❑ Good initial liaison dialogue with motorized recreational user groups ❑ Commitment to cooperative planning modeled in Larch Hills Traverse trail with Federated Coop, supportive initial discussion with Louisiana Pacific
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Vandalism, compliance and enforcement (STOS, 2002) ❑ Minimal existing support infrastructures (trails) in many areas. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Access to Crown leases or other Commercial Recreation (CR) tenure. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Repeatability of land based product potential. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Poor shoulder season (STOS, 2002) for non-winter use huts ❑ Some difficult trailhead access points, especially to highland areas ❑ Need full time management capacity to move next stage of development ❑ Predominantly “working forest” land base resistant to new recreational and commercial interests requiring permanence guarantees ❑ Region notable for dominant motorized recreational use – both Off Road Vehicle infrastructure (tracks and roads) and water based ❑ Limited start-up capital and operational funds in place ❑ Limited general interest in hut use by local public within the region ❑ Landowner resistance/uncertainty in trailhead access (in some areas) ❑ First Nations involvement/support cautious through initial discussions with Adams Lake Indian Band council ❑ Limited inter-regional cooperative destination marketing efforts in place; existing destination marketing focus on generalized tourism attraction ❑ While clearly supportive, a lack of proactive engagement from Provincially mandated Destination Management Organizations (TOTA, Tourism BC) ❑ Adventure Okanagan Cooperative capacity to move 5 Rings Trail strategy forward is

	<p>currently limited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Limited knowledge of product development and packaging opportunities by existing accommodation operators ❑ Administrative caution by regional governance related to liability ❑ Limited community consultation within CSRD Area F requires further work – would benefit from dedicated area consultation similar to Area E
<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ New First Nations partnerships that honour existing legacy of regional trails, recognize contemporary aboriginal governance of the Shuswap territory, and advocate on behalf of Shuswap First Nation’s exercise of land title. ❑ Increase regional identity for ecologically sustainable natural lifestyle through carefully designed natural pathways and point-to-point (hut-to-hut) accommodations promoting an environmental ethic, sustainable economics, and a reputation for healthy living and recreation that in turn ❑ Increases international exposure and overall community and regional competitive advantage ❑ Secure natural green space and habitat corridors, including remaining “remote” wilderness areas ❑ Manage impacts in sensitive and high value areas, ❑ Introduce the public to the region’s diverse ecology, and inspire a new generation of leadership committed to ecological sustainability ❑ Inspire people to leave their vehicles, become more physically active, and encounter the natural world through a variety of non-motorized outdoor recreational activities. ❑ Opportunity to conduct advanced research on the impacts and appropriate management between non-motorized outdoor recreation and wildlife ❑ Leverage economic benefits including direct lifestyle/social assets, decreased health care dependency, accommodation and hospitality, guide services, small business development, job creation, education services, land and property value retention ❑ Opportunity to provide support services that cater to recreational trail use and cabins including waste management, servicing, booking, boat and other equipment rentals, retail, and repair. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Cabin-to-cabin systems have yet to be developed in the Shuswap region and (STOS, 2002) ❑ Potential to target a high-end eco-tourism experience, a rustic self-catered style

experience, and educational experiences

- ❑ There are suitable circuit locations for cabin-to-cabin system. (STOS, 2002) Phase 1 field studies suggest high potential for Anstey Highland Route (Area E), Big Bend Gold Rush Route (especially Celista to Seymour), Enderby Cliffs to Wap Lake (Gordon Dale Memorial Trail),
- ❑ Potential for mixed point-to-point overnight suitability (linking existing trailhead accommodations like B&Bs or resorts with cabins) is high in the Inner Shuswap trail route area, and very high for the Shuswap water trail concept from Resiwig to Hunakwa Lake (note: significant B&B operator interest along the Enderby to Mara Lake section)
- ❑ Dedicated single site hut potential exists for educational opportunities (ecology, health, physical recreation) in the Larch Hills Traverse and Skimikin Connector routes
- ❑ Trailhead accommodation potential for day tripping presents as high for Sicamous, Salmon Arm, Sunnysbrea/Herald Park, Whitelake, Blind Bay, Skimikin Lake Rec Site, Squilax, Scotch Creek, and Seymour Arm.
- ❑ Secondary potential for trailhead accommodators is identified for Malakwa, Tappen, Eagle Bay, Sorrento, Celista, Anglemont
- ❑ New opportunity for widespread regional cooperation (CSRD areas, municipalities, First Nations)
- ❑ Link with other regional and inter-regional trail efforts to leverage lobby, funding, marketing and knowledge assets
- ❑ 5 Rings Trail Strategy waiting to be implemented with significant benefits, including opportunity to promote the “smart travel” concept of ecologically responsible travel choices
- ❑ Provincial and Industry/Utilities based funding opportunities available
- ❑ Opportunity to leverage existing regional capital investment in trails for matching funding grants
- ❑ Strong potential for substantial public and private sponsorships
- ❑ The CSRD Parks plan, Skimikin Backcountry Horse Trails, Little Shuswap Indian Band Bike Trails, Salmon Arm and Sicamous Greenways plans, and ongoing Larch Hills Nordic Ski/Shuswap Outdoors trails together with the Shuswap Trail Alliance (Larch Hills Traverse pilot), Gordon Dale Memorial Trail and new provincial re-investment in recreational site maintenance (eg. Joss/Tsiuis Mountain trail) leverages viable development of necessary support infrastructure (trails) for a cabin-to-cabin

	<p>system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Develop co-use trails management plan with motorized recreational user groups, including education, use ethics, and monitoring/patrol strategy ❑ Viable cooperative multi-stakeholder model for long-term management and maintenance, includes. . . ❑ Sustainability of point-to-point (hut-to-hut) sections through reservations and trailhead accommodator/operator use ❑ Management of recreational and commercial tenure possible under regional Trail Alliance model ❑ Section 58 designation to secure non-motorized use of trails and huts, plus link into Provincial liability coverage ❑ Cooperative planning with Forest Industry (eg. Federated Coop) ❑ Spread understanding of good trail design/construction techniques, increase consistency of trail experience and value throughout region
<p>Threats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Vulnerable scenic management of the forestland base. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Road closures. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Trails vulnerable to timber harvesting without designated protection ❑ Increased recreation use affecting "remote" experience. (STOS, 2002) ❑ Inadvertently open sensitive habitat to unsustainable human impact and negatively impact and displace wildlife (Especially in Alpine. Note: significant concern was expressed by Sicamous/Area E residents about negatively affecting Grizzly habitat) ❑ Unmanaged backcountry recreational vulnerable to motorized dominance displacing non-motorized recreational use – lake and land trails. ❑ Motorized use co-opting newly built designated non-motorized trails (especially prior to Section 58 approvals) ❑ Decreased tourism value for non-motorized recreational enthusiasts with increased or regular encounter of motorized vehicles and industry ❑ Increased carbon emissions due to vehicle access of trailheads ❑ Localized resistance from some adjacent landowners demonstrated in CSRD Area F parks implementation and with South Canoe trailhead proposal ❑ Public concern of potential for increased garbage, vandalism, and noise ❑ Poorly designed trailhead areas – parking overflow, lack of toilet facilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Need for human resource capacity to implement sustainable management and maintenance, including monitoring and compliance❑ Long haul resilience of organization and potential burn out of core volunteer leadership❑ Need for ongoing fundraising for operation and maintenance❑ Exclusive sub-regional approach will limit cooperative leverage❑ Target marketing too generalized and broad to leverage maximum potential for long-term sustainability
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Appendix B:

Feasibility Planning Phase 1: Preliminary Concept Development

November 2004

Overall goals for this stage of the planning:

- ❑ to determine the overall economic, recreation and environmental viability of the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail Circuit and Waterway Initiative;
- ❑ and to assess regional community support for the concept

Objectives for this phase:

- ❑ establish a steering committee and advisory cluster to direct the trail planning process
- ❑ consult with vested stakeholder groups and individuals throughout the Shuswap, (see “Project Partners” above)
- ❑ gather existing research on the design, management and market potential for a regional hut-to-hut trail system, including:
 - a review of other regional hut-to-hut systems and trail development initiatives
 - interviews with businesses linked to backcountry hut, cabin, or lodge operations
 - further collection of relevant background studies and reports
- ❑ conduct a review of existing recreation trail and land management plans in the region, as well as compatibility with new plans currently being developed
- ❑ prepare a draft mapping template of the potential hut-to-hut trail system, including a survey of current landholders, licensees, tenure applicants, first nations interests, recreational management use, and other relevant geographical layering
- ❑ research the potential for creating a legacy project within the provincial Spirit of 2010 initiative, and the LegaciesNow support network
- ❑ define the nature of a partnership within the “Five Rings Trail” initiative
- ❑ establish initial contact with relevant governing agencies. These would include:
 - Local Government
 - First Nations
 - Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 - Lands and Water BC
 - The Ministry of Forests

- Ministry of Energy and Mines
- The Ministry of Sustainable Resources
- The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
- British Columbia Parks
- Wildlife, Habitat and Enforcement
- Federal Ministries may also include Aboriginal Affairs and HRSD
- address key issues in the design and management of a hut-to-hut trail system⁷, including:
 - tenureship application requirements
 - how to balance commercial and non-commercial recreational use
 - how can it be economically viable and present solid eco-business opportunities
 - scenic management of the forest land base
 - regional accountability and organizational structure – what is the best way to coordinate our long-term efforts – society? alliance? association? trails council?
 - trail and hut building issues
 - trail and hut reservations and the value of a centralized reservation system
 - insurance and liability
- draft a development and implementation outline for phase two of the trail system
- conduct an initial survey of financing options for development and management
- gather endorsement for phase two of the hut-to-hut trail initiative from local government and stakeholder groups
- prepare funding proposals for phase two of the hut-to-hut trail initiative

⁷ See *Regional SWOT Analysis for Cabin Systems*, p. 115. STOS, May 2002

Appendix C: Background Rational on the Trail Alliance Name

from Thursday, May 12, 2005

Naming. . .is important.

Weighing the pros and cons of various title structures each seemed to imply a different type of organizational purpose. Following is a brief representation of the May 12, 2005 discussion that led to the final settlement on the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance.

Various organisational titles were considered.

Society – while everyone was in general agreement that for the regional structure a not-for-profit incorporation was most realistic (given that disbursement of revenue is not intended to go to share holders or individuals, but back into the health, maintenance and management of the trails and hut system), it was noted that the term “society” implies yet another stand alone society amongst societies. The fundamental idea of bringing regional stakeholders together into a partnership is not reflected, nor is the notion that this is a body capable of managing economic development interests along side environmental stewardship strategies and recreational goals.

Association – This term moves a little closer in the direction of the partnership model of organizations, governing bodies, user groups, and individuals being considering.

Alliance – this term came out as a more favoured option. It implies a serious intention of partnership and an agreement amongst stakeholders to work in concord toward a common purpose. It seems better suited to carry the breadth of scope and mandated authority we’ve been searching for – one that can carry recreational, environmental and economic interests – and yet recognizes the need for local efforts and champions. It also leaves room for adaptation as things grow and evolve.

Authority – this term was drawn from Don Elzer’s (D. Elzer, 2005) discussion paper and the reference to the Conservation Authorities of Ontario as a model to look at. In this case, it implies an added degree of authority – one that is “governmentally tasked.” It takes the Alliance idea and moves it one step further by suggesting the organization have a mandated role in the management of the trail and hut system as a natural resource, and one that is held in the public interest – or commons.

Under Don’s discussion paper, the implication is that the trail resource management committee (or authority) created in our region is matched in the four other regions down the Okanagan corridor as we link together under a unified banner.

It also stands to reason, then, that there be a unifying umbrella body within which each of the regional trail authorities converge to share resources, avoid duplication, and co-manage in areas that are linked such as a single reservation system for the huts.

The discussion most favoured the “authority” tag, but recognized it was definitely one that would need to be explored both with our regional stakeholders and with the provincial land resource ministries.

And front end naming

The importance of the geographical title is critical in linking our local efforts and organizations.

Shuswap alone seemed to miss the northern gateway area into the Okanagan including the Gordon Dale Memorial Trail, and the eastern region toward Revelstoke. Interestingly, the conservation authorities in Ontario are loosely established around dominant regional watersheds. Under this model, the Shuswap watershed certainly makes sense, incorporating Mabel lake, Enderby, north to Sicamous, east to the Perry, and far north into the Seymour. However, the name Shuswap alone seemed limited.

High Country Trails – just to add to the conversation, Jeremy Ayotte recalled working for John Delay on forestry recreation sites and adopting the business moniker, High Country Trails as reflective of the region’s terrain. Everyone liked the simple yet evocative ring. However, it was also felt this implied an exclusively high country wilderness experience that might be perceived as out-of-league to some. So breadth of vision needs to be held in the title.

First Nations Authenticity – several folks nudged for alternate terms that might be appropriately rooted in the First Nation’s land authority. This was seen as a desirable direction, but it was agreed that it would need to be discussed when we gather together as a whole with First Nation’s partners.

So . . .Columbia Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance (Authority?) – in the end, there was encouragement to cut to the chase and create a working title to get things moving. Picking up again from Don Elzer’s discussion paper (D. Elzer, 2005) naming the Shuswap region within the 5 Rings as the Columbia Shuswap, the group found itself gravitating to the breadth and connection made geographically in the combined terms.

Post Script. . .

The proposed organizational title, the Columbia Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance was taken to the wider steering advisory. Interestingly, feedback favoured a simpler phrasing linked to the defining flow of watershed within the region from Greenbush Lake to the mouth of the South Thompson River. So the final elected title for the newly formed Alliance of regional stakeholders advocating the development of regional non-motorized trails: The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance.

The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance

The societies registry required “the” to be removed and “Society” to be added, leaving the official title as *Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society*. See the following Constitution for the Purpose and Goals of the Organization. For purposes of identity the following variations on a theme would seem acceptable within the evolving organizational environment of the Alliance.

- The Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail and Waterway Initiative
- Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance
- Shuswap Trail Alliance
- SHTA

- SH2H Trail & Waterway Initiative
- the SH2H

And the trail and waterway itself?

- The Shuswap Trail (SH2HT)
- The Shuswap **Water**Trail (SH2H2O)
- The Great Shuswap Trail Circuit

Appendix D: Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society

Constitution

1. **THE NAME** of the society is Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society.

2. **The Purpose of the Society is:** to promote the development of extended trail, waterway and hut-to-hut routes for self-propelled/non-motorized⁸ four-season nature-based travel within the wider Shuswap watershed region (Shuswap River/Mabel Lake/Enderby/Shuswap Lake/Perry River/Eagle/Seymour/Adams/ and Little Shuswap)
 - a. To build an alliance of partner stakeholders committed to the sustainable development and management of trail, waterway and hut-to-hut routes in the Shuswap watershed region
 - b. To promote extended overnight self-propelled/non-motorized backcountry travel opportunities through the creation of hut-to-hut and camping facilities
 - c. To model and promote ecological integrity and environmental stewardship as a guiding principle throughout the system
 - d. To plan for long-term management and maintenance of trail routes and huts based on sound business practices, identifiable revenue sources, and the calculation of natural capital⁹ assets in the bottom-line of sustainable operations
 - e. To accept, acquire, and raise resources (financial, material and labour) for trail, waterway and hut development and management projects throughout the region
 - f. To promote nature-based recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities throughout the hut-to-hut trail and waterway system
 - g. To promote safety, courtesy and environmental awareness while using the trails, waterways and huts throughout the Shuswap region
 - h. To promote long-term community economic development opportunities related to nature based travel and the hut-to-hut trail system – measurable in stable local employment and the retention of regionally based business operations
 - i. To create a forum for local trail proponents to share resources, knowledge and planning solutions, addressing issues that include:

⁸ "Self-propelled/non-motorized" includes hiking, mountain biking, canoe and kayaking, skiing, snow-shoeing and equestrian travel

⁹ Natural Capital refers to an emerging approach in business that includes "ecosystem services" on the economic balance sheet. It is a concept gaining recognition as companies discover that making resources more productive not only increases ecological protection but can also improve profitability and competitiveness. See *A Road Map for Natural Capitalism*, by Amory Lovins, L. Hunter Lovins, and Paul Hawken. The Harvard Business Review, May-June 1999.

- i. Sound trail planning practices
 - ii. Environmental impact assessment
 - iii. Working within existing land resource plans
 - iv. Liability and risk management planning
 - v. Multi-use recreational practices
 - vi. Developing cooperative standards with existing user groups
 - vii. Joint educational opportunities
 - viii. Economic sustainability
- j. To provide a common meeting point for liaison with other organizations including Provincial land resource ministries and planning agencies, industry, business operators, other recreational interest groups, search and rescue, tenure and private land owners
 - k. To liaise with regional and provincial tourism marketing organizations (DMO's) promoting a shared marketing and promotion strategy for self-propelled/non-motorized trail and waterway routes as they are developed throughout the region
 - l. To work toward creating a formally delegated regional trail council endorsed by local government, First Nations and the Province responsible for management, development, education, recreation, environmental stewardship, and economic development of the trail and waterway routes
 - m. To promote the creation of an inter-regional alliance of trail councils linking a hut-to-hut trail route spanning the Okanagan/Shuswap mountain trench (The Southern Interior Trail Council Alliance and the 5 Rings Trail Strategy¹⁰)
3. **ON DISSOLUTION** of the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society and after payment of all debts and liabilities, the members shall distribute the remaining assets of the Alliance to one or more BC organizations with similar purposes pursuant to regulations of the Income Tax Act.
 4. **PROFITS:** Any profits or other accretions to the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society shall be used for promoting its mission and goals.
 5. Clauses 3, 4 and 5 are unalterable.

¹⁰ See *5 Rings Trail Initiative* as proposed by Adventure Okanagan Cooperative/Bearfoot Canada.

Appendix E: Phase 2 – Design, Planning and Implementation

Updated: May 9, 2006

The following goals are based on the Strategic Implementation Option B.

Overall goals for this stage of the initiative:

- ❑ refine the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail Circuit and Waterway initiative objectives
- ❑ develop a comprehensive plan for the design, implementation and long-term management of the trail system
- ❑ build regional ownership through ongoing community consultation, partnership commitment, and investment funding
- ❑ implement a three, five and ten year cycle of development objectives

Operating Goals for this phase include:

Advanced Route Plotting and Mapping

- ❑ identify key links between towns, community facilities, trailheads, greenways, and other natural, cultural, historical, and recreational assets
- ❑ pinpoint specific trail routes, circuits and hut locations, and prioritise for development
- ❑ prepare detailed mapping of priority sections based on file data and in-field surveys
- ❑ research and address cultural and heritage considerations for each area
- ❑ research and address core environmental considerations for each area
- ❑ assess and establish applicable trail use, sharing and access protocol

Ongoing Landowner, Licensee and Community Consultation

- ❑ build local endorsement from stakeholders through ongoing consultation and the establishment of formal partnerships, with a priority on First Nations partnership, regional district and municipal cooperation
- ❑ build broad regional public awareness and ownership for the trails initiative through public presentations, media announcements and community-wide PR
- ❑ identify and contact landowners and licensees along priority routes

Land Tenure and Environmental Stewardship

- ❑ determine land tenure and environmental stewardship requirements
- ❑ conduct ecological impact audits of priority trail segments
- ❑ establish ecological management objectives and strategies

- ❑ gather necessary information, prepare applications, negotiate and secure required approvals

Design and Building Plan

- ❑ research applicable trail and hut design standards
- ❑ consult with potential trail users to identify preferred design requirements
- ❑ research design options through discussion and site visits to established trail systems
- ❑ draft concept design and building plans for trails and huts, addressing issues such as:
 - route placement and hut location
 - environmental impact and development policies
 - water and erosion control
 - signs and traffic markings
 - safety, risk management and liability
- ❑ prepare a timeline for trail and hut development

Management, Marketing and Maintenance Plan

- ❑ draft a detailed business plan for the hut-to-hut trail system, addressing:
 - aims, objectives and target user groups
 - strategies to meet objectives
 - evaluation methods to measure outcomes
 - management and organizational structure
 - staffing
 - registration systems
 - future planning and development
 - maintenance of the huts and trails
 - budget and financial management
 - programs and services to be offered
- ❑ develop a marketing strategy that addresses:
 - positioning of the trail as a world-class destination experience for the self-propelled, nature-based traveller
 - development of wide spread local recognition and ownership of the trail system
 - motivation of increased active living use of the trails locally

- educational opportunities for environmental stewardship
- promotion of the business opportunities for tourism and recreational operators based on the hut-to-hut trail system

Financial Management and Funding

- develop a financial strategy that addresses:
 - capital funding for the construction of trail infrastructure
 - ongoing management, maintenance and marketing of the trail system
 - the opportunities and structure for sustainable commercial operations
- consult with potential funding sources
- prepare funding proposals for further implementation of the trails initiative
- and where feasible, to initiate and/or support the development of new trails that fit within the Shuswap Hut-to-Hut Trail Circuit's strategic goals and regional mapping template

Evaluation and Adaptive Monitoring

- monitor and evaluate target outcomes,
- review and redirect strategic plan according to foundational project goals.

Phase 2: Target Objectives and Project Timeline

DRAFT PROPOSED Updated: November 14, 2006

June 2006: Pilot Trail Project Section 57 Approvals – Larch Hills Traverse and Rubberhead Mountain Bike	
July - October 2006	<p>Identity Development (Name/logo/basic sign)</p> <p>Investment Funding Campaign Launched/Source Funding secured for Summer Mapping Consultant</p> <p>Pilot Trail Development Project Underway Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 30 kilometres well-designed, cleared, signed, and locally publicized (Larch Hills Traverse/Rubberhead) <p>Project Work Centre Established</p> <p>Route Development and Consultation continues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> North Shuswap, Skimikin/Squilax Connection, North Queest/Anstey Highland, Inner Shuswap Circle, West Bay Trail to Shuswap Cultural Centre <p>Summer Mapping Consultant</p>
Phase 2 Implementation: Five Year Strategic Objectives	
Fall/Winter 2006/07	<p>Management team structure established to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Overall Project Development <input type="checkbox"/> Construction/Volunteer Management <input type="checkbox"/> Project Administration/Financial Management <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Consultation <input type="checkbox"/> GIS/Mapping Services <input type="checkbox"/> Website/Marketing/Design Services <p>Trail Alliance Organizational Structure refined/clarify local route development partnerships/legal and liability</p> <p>2007 Development Investment funding secured</p>

	<p>Route Development and Consultation continues: Spring development priorities set, approval process initiated, including environmental/ecological audits</p> <p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reinececker Creek/Blind Bay <input type="checkbox"/> Skimikin Lake Connector <input type="checkbox"/> Lee Creek Bluffs <input type="checkbox"/> Old Town Bay/Marble Point <input type="checkbox"/> Upper Gorge/North Queest <p>Marketing Strategy developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> first round Provincial publicity implemented <input type="checkbox"/> local promotional guide materials produced
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First of three-year route and hut site development projects begins

<p>Spring/Summer 07</p>	<p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 70 + km route section established by Fall 2007 (“well-designed, well-signed, and maintained”) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Larch Hills Traverse/Rubberhead Trail System <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Hut Construction Project Initiated (Larch Hills/Mica Lookout?) <p>Route Development and Consultation continues:</p> <p>Marketing focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial awareness
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Advanced Consultation and Planning: Shuswap Water Trail

<p>2008</p>	<p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 70 + km trail development <input type="checkbox"/> 2 new hut sites initiated (Upper Gorge/North Queest?) <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Consultation and Planning: Shuswap Water Trail <p>Route Development and Consultation continues:</p> <p>Marketing focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> National Awareness
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First complete 5 day hut-to-hut route established

2009	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 70 + km trail development<input type="checkbox"/> 2 new hut sites initiated Marketing focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> International
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5 – 10 year management strategy implementation

2010 +	Second tier hut and trail route objectives begin
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Appendix F: The 5 Rings Trail Initiative

communiqué

Adventure Okanagan Co-operative and Bearfoot Canada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2004

ADVENTURE OKANAGAN PROPOSES WORLD-CLASS TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

Okanagan/Shuswap, British Columbia – Adventure Okanagan Co-operative and its Development Division Bearfoot Canada have announced today that it has officially proposed trail development project to both the Federal and Provincial governments that would help retain small business operations hit hard by natural and political events of the past number of years.

The Five Rings Trail is a proposed Hut-to-Hut Trail Network that would link backcountry areas from Osoyoos and the Boundary/Similkameen with the Okanagan and then the Monashee and Shuswap, ending in Revelstoke.

“It is our intention that the Five Rings Trail be complete in advance of the Olympics in 2010 and be directly linked to benefit nature-based tour operators, small backcountry lodges and rural accommodators” stated Don Elzer, Managing Director of Adventure Okanagan Co-operative (AOC).

The project would be constructed in partnership with rural communities and outdoor organizations as well as key stakeholders, which presently perform business operations in the backcountry.

Elzer stated that the Hut-to-Hut would have a public access and commercial formula that remains a “work in progress” however he stated, “Adventure Okanagan represents self-propelled travel, so our intention is to retain the environment as pristine and emphasize guided group travel, along the lines of what occurs in other areas of the world where visitors want to explore sensitive habitat”.

Elzer claims that within an overall tourism strategy the Five Rings Trail would be a world-class visitor experience that would have significant impact as far as building tourism revenues. He compared it to having two more ski hills in the interior without the environmental impact.

“The trail would really help existing backcountry and rural accommodators, since they would act as “Trailhead” locations. These operations have been suffering of late, and while the government is moving to develop resorts in time for the Olympics there does not seem to be a lot of effort placed on retaining existing business operations to ensure that they survive between now and the Olympics”, stated Elzer.

Presently, AOC is working with potential partners for the project to draft detailed plans for the construction of the Five Rings Trail. If you would like more information as to how to get involved, contact Don Elzer at 250-547-9812. Or visit www.bearfootcanada.com

(30)

About Adventure Okanagan Co-operative

The Adventure Okanagan Co-operative (AOC) represents adventure and eco-tourism operators located in British Columbia including the Okanagan, Shuswap and Monashee regions, from Osoyoos to Sicamous. AOC members work together to bring a diverse travel experience to visitors through travel packaging that promotes safe, exciting, responsible travel within one of the most beautiful regions in Western North America.

AOC performs marketing programs; travel packaging services and promotion; tour itinerary design; helps reduce business costs for members; offer business development services and promote advocacy promoting habitat preservation and adventures in education, ecology and culture.

www.adventureokanagan.com

About Bearfoot Canada

"Bearfoot Canada builds unique and authentic Canadian cultural experiences through nature-based travel"

Bearfoot Canada is the development division of Adventure Okanagan Co-operative and is a Canadian Tourism Commission Product Club. Bearfoot builds partnerships that assemble the resources to provide assistance for the ongoing maintenance of backcountry trails and sensitive habitat while educating the public about responsible travel as well as marketing nature-based travel worldwide. Bearfoot Canada also performs educational programs for the travel industry.

www.bearfootcanada.com

Appendix G: List of Interview Contacts

DRAFT

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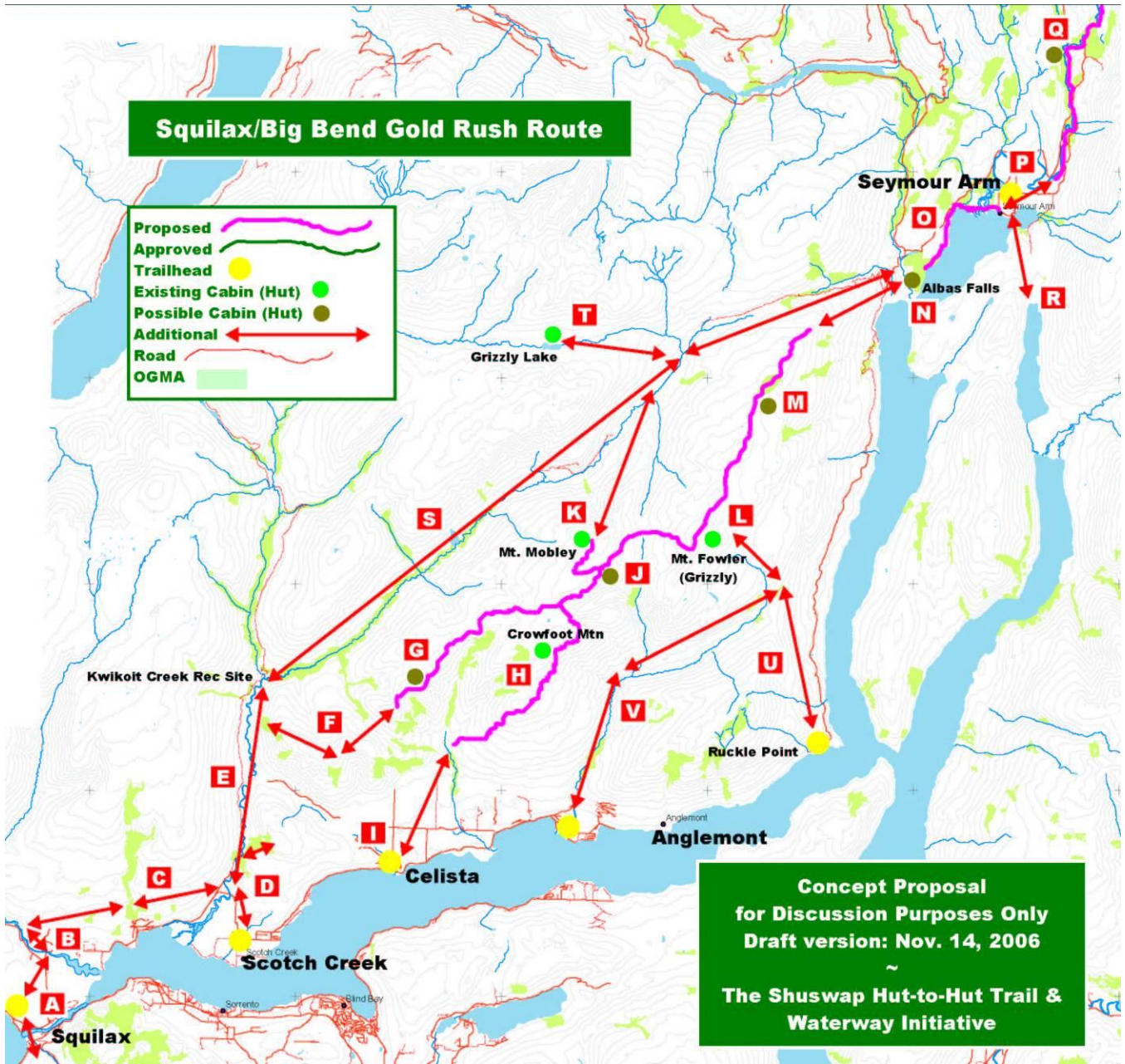
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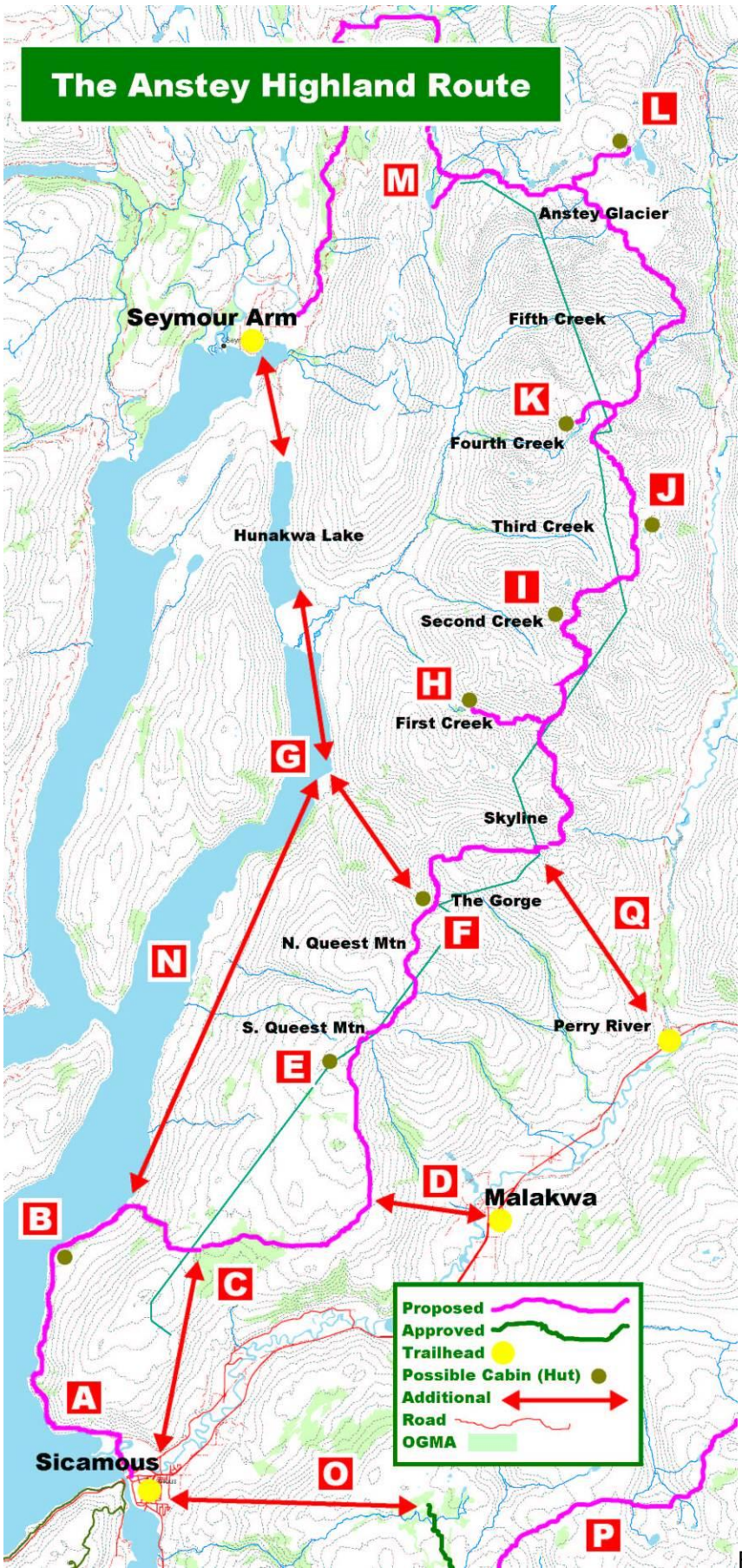
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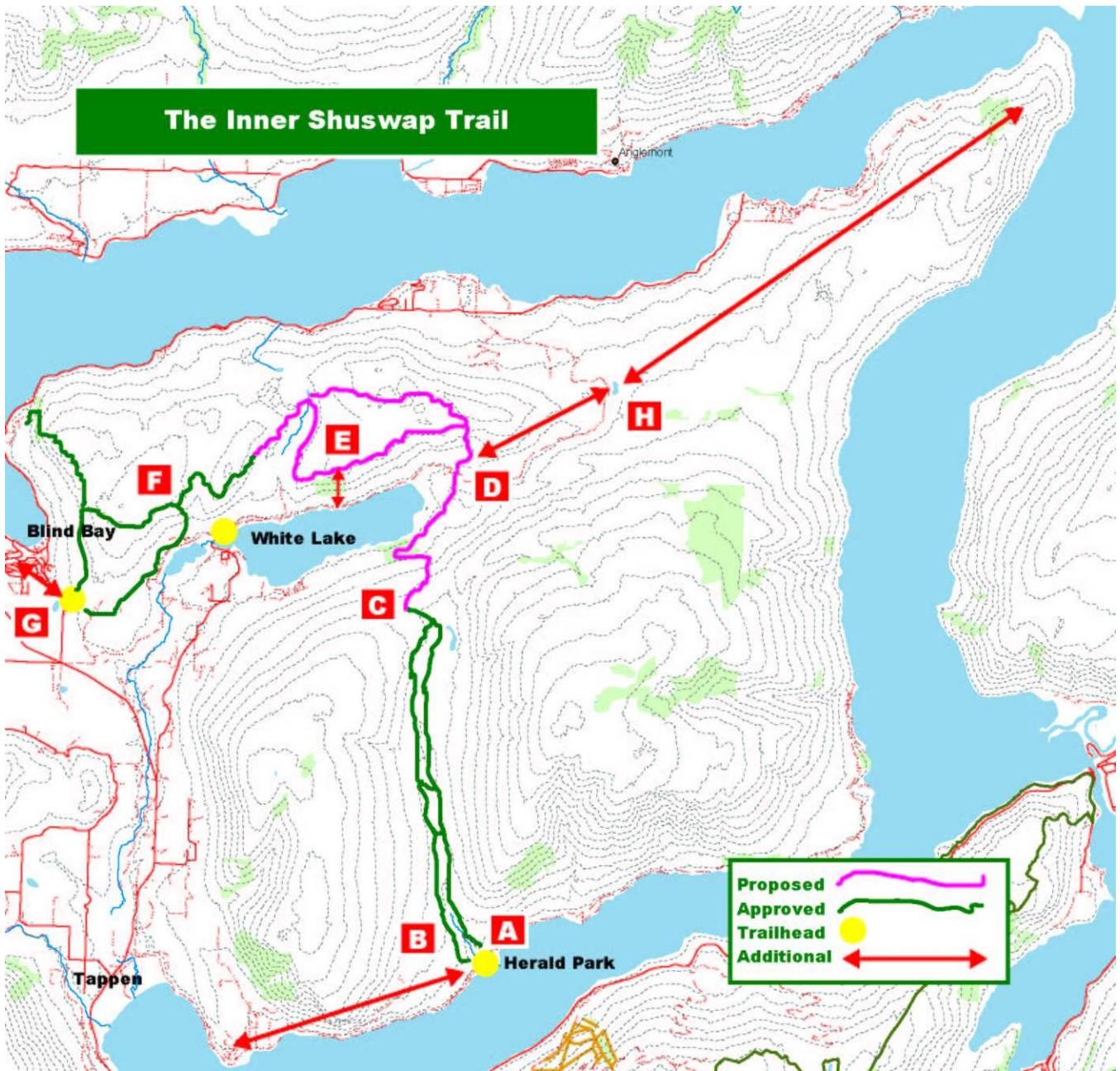
Attachment: Route Maps



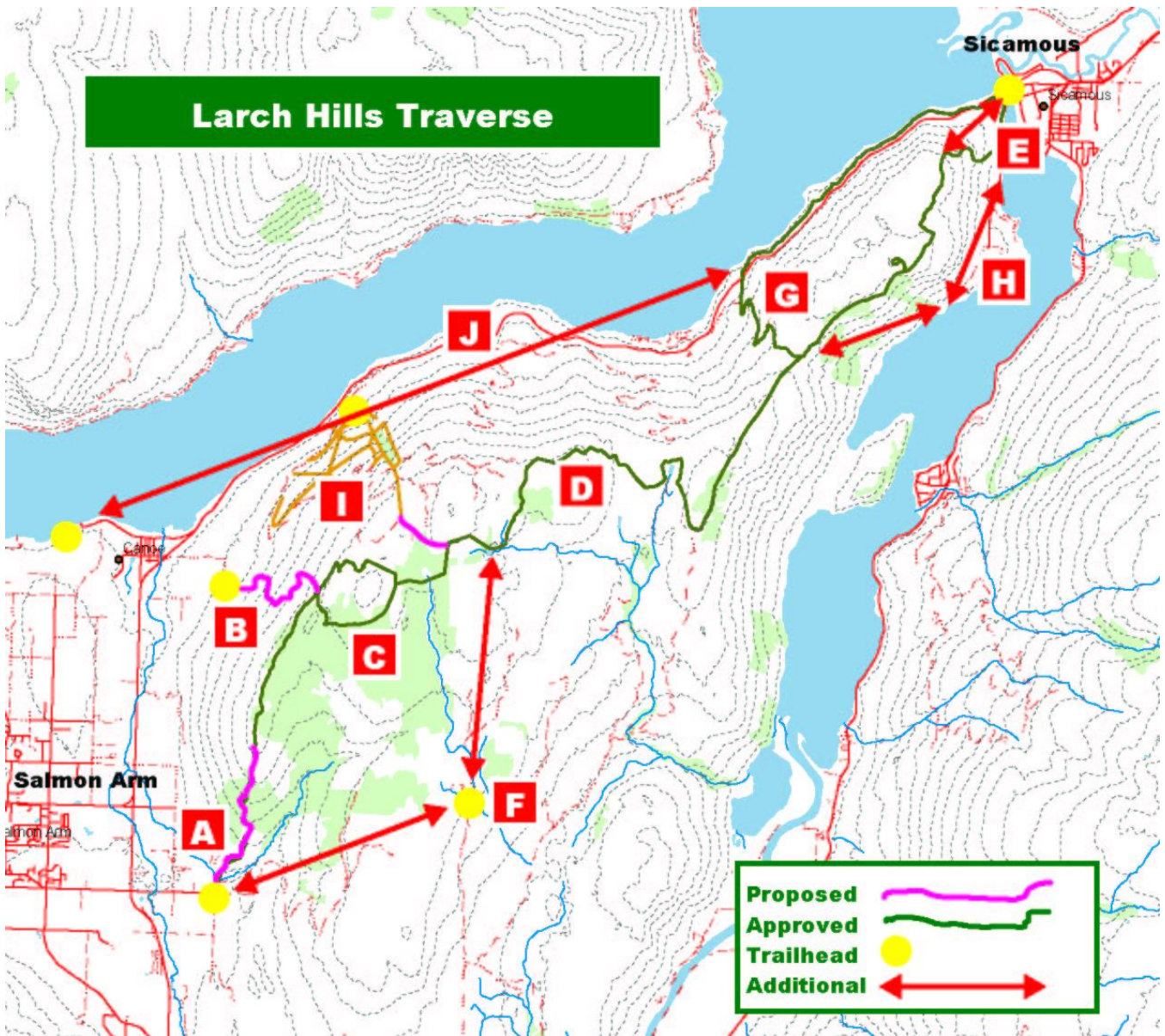
Route 1: Squilax/Big Bend Gold Rush Route



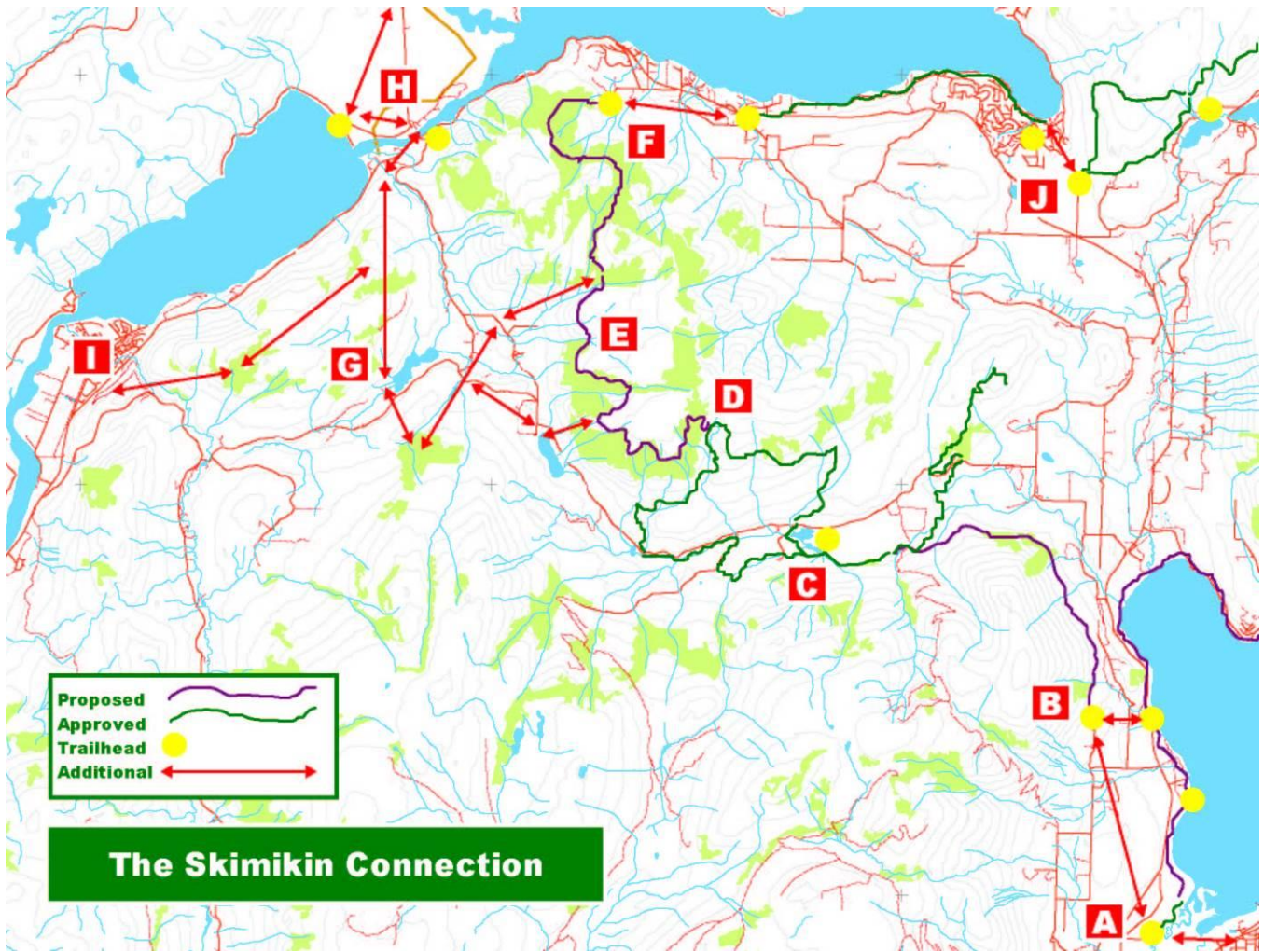
Route 2: Anstey Highland Route



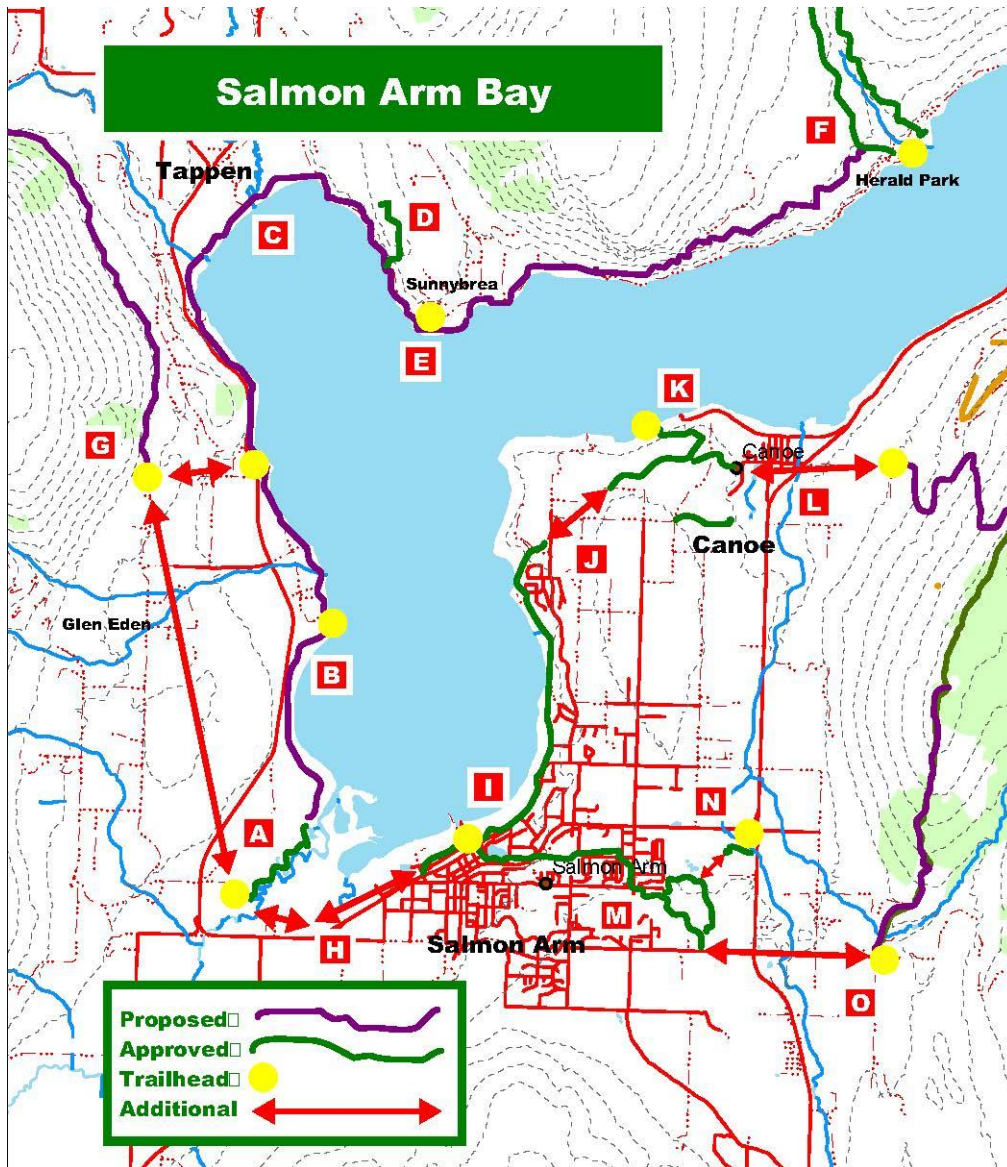
Route 3: The Inner Shuswap Trail



Route 4: Larch Hills Traverse



Route 5: Skimikin Connection



Route 6: Salmon Arm Bay