

# FOOTPRINTS ON



# THE VI TRAIL



[www.vi-trail.ca](http://www.vi-trail.ca)

**SPRING, 2019**

## **CONTENTS**

**Closing the Gaps in The VI Trail**  
**Kudos to Island Timberlands**  
**Focus on a VITA Board Member**  
**Alberni's "Gold Standard Trail Crew"**  
**Want to Get Involved?**

### **CLOSING THE GAPS IN THE VI TRAIL**

*(Editor's note: Big thanks to VI Trails Director Terry Lewis for this and the following submission)*

The two remaining substantial gaps in the VI Trail lie between the Alberni Valley and Cumberland (Beaufort Range) and between the north boundary of Strathcona Provincial Park and Strathcona Dam. Lands to be crossed are almost entirely the private forest lands of Timber West and Island Timberlands (there are 2 land-locked parcels of Crown land in the Beauforts). Both TW and IT are now wholly owned by government pension funds (both federal and provincial).

Late last year, TW and IT entered into a so-called affiliation agreement, which will integrate the management of the lands of the two companies, holdings that are commonly intermingled across the landscape. Although the two companies will remain as separate business units, land management will be handled by a new subsidiary – Mosaic Forest Management – resulting in a common set of policies including those with respect to recreation use of the lands and First Nations consultation.

For VITA, this means dealing with one rather than two entities and may well reduce the number of required

land use agreements from 9 to 5 (i.e. covering the 5 Regional Districts involved). As reported in the last newsletter, TimberWest and now Mosaic are supportive of the VI Trail and are working to finalize the first land use agreement with the Comox Valley Regional District. Recently, Mosaic approached VITA to develop a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that will outline our relationship, provide for a joint approach to Regional Districts in formally/legally establishing the Trail, and outline the process by which the trail routing will be determined. At this point, a draft MoU is being worked on. It includes sections on:

1. *access* to Mosaic lands - access arrangements/requirements
2. *development* of the trail - principles for trail location/development
3. *communications* - between company, VITA and users.

A key aspect of the MoU is that it will provide for land access and planning/locating of the VI Trail through the private lands in advance of completing land use agreements with the RDs. This gets around the past catch-22 situation whereby nothing could proceed

without agreements, but agreements were hampered by the lack of a defined trail plan and a lack of access.

Although not all 5 RDs are interested/supportive of the VI Trail, the MoU presumes that all RDs will eventually participate as progress is made in closing the gaps across the private forest lands. In closing, VITA thanks the representatives and senior management of Mosaic and the staff of the Comox Valley Regional District for their efforts in furthering the completion of our Vancouver Island Trail.

## KUDOS TO ISLAND TIMBERLANDS

The majority of the Vancouver Island Trail is located across managed forest lands, both Crown and private. If one assumes a 50-year rotation (i.e. from planting to harvest; actually it's probably somewhat more than 50 years on average), then we might expect about 2% of the Trail to be impacted by logging every year. But since some of the trail is within Parks and other forms of legal protection (210 km) and some is within riparian and other reserves, it's likely that no more than 1% of the Trail will be impacted annually.

This amounts to about 7 km of trail impacted every year. Some of this will involve old road that we use being re-built and re-activated (again available for trail use after a short active period), and some will involve single-track trail being logged within a cutblock. Regardless of the actual distance involved, it is clear that VITA must plan for such disruptions and the resulting maintenance effort required. It is also clear that VITA needs to develop an effective working relationship with forestry companies and ideally with their contractors and employees. Without such a working relationship, we will 'wear out our welcome' on the managed forest land base.

Enough theorizing – back to reality: Over the winter, Island Timberlands logged some cutblocks along Stage 1 of the Alberni Inlet Trail. During this activity, the trail was closed for a few months for obvious safety reasons - it has since re-opened. Much of the potentially affected trail remains within the forest of various reserves (riparian etc.) – although not directly impacted, this did (as is often the case) result in additional windfall to be cleared up.

Some trail within the clearcut area had to be re-established and trail was disrupted where crossed by

roads in a few places. This is where we found much improved practices with respect to the trail.

As anyone who has built trail knows, where trails intersect roads there is usually a tangle of slash and stumps to clear out/cut through, and loose, barely stable cutslopes and fillslopes that need re-sloping/benching. In the recent IT cutblocks, wherever the trail intersected a road, the road contractor and/or his backhoe machine operator had taken some extra care and time to clear, grade and even surface a smooth transition between the road and the trail. There was no work required by the trail maintenance crew whatsoever – what a pleasant surprise! Kudos to all involved. Take a look at the following images:

**Trail builders admiring the timber company work on access to the trail.**

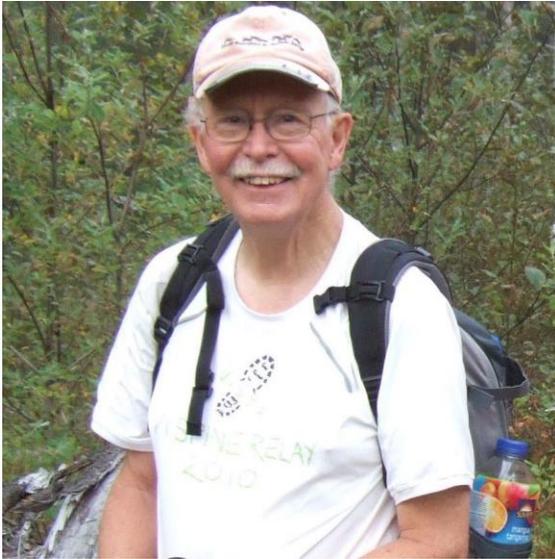


**The timber company took time to grade a smooth transition from road to trail.**



## WE CONTINUE OUR FOCUS ON ONE OF VITA'S BOARD MEMBERS:

### Bill Feyer



Alberta native, Bill graduated as an engineer from the University of Alberta, and moved to Victoria in 1971. He managed Harjim Industrial Services and then worked for Nicholson Manufacturing as Canadian Sales Manager until retiring in 2003. He is a member of the Victoria-Harbourside Rotary Club where he is a Past President and currently active in International Humanitarian Service work.

Bill has enjoyed backcountry hiking for many years since climbing the Bugaboos in the 60's and then took a climbing course at the Y in the early '70s where he met VI Trail's Past President Gil Parker. In the years following, he and Gil have done a number of trips together on the Island and the Rockies that usually include fellow Board Member Peter Berrang. He has also been with Gil to Patagonia (Chile/Argentina), to the Caucasus in Georgia and once, did a week-long hike in the Salzkammergut of Austria by himself.

Bills favorite statement is: "I am not lost; I am just not where I want to be."

**(Bill reminds us that we are celebrating VITA's 10th anniversary! Incorporated as VISTA in 2009 by current Board Members Peter Berrang, Gil Parker and Bill) ♀**

## ALBERNI'S "GOLD STANDARD" TRAIL CREW "A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH"

*(Editor's note: Big thanks to VI Trails David Webb for the following submission with photo)*

Often, when David Webb and other volunteers are out working on the VI Trail, they come across Port Alberni's hard working trail crew. David has nicknamed them the "Gold Standard Trail Crew", recognizing the most excellent work they do while demonstrating a great work ethic. David further says: "A real synergy exists between us as we go about our various tasks and duties clearing and making trail. They, and others, have turned the Alberni Inlet Trail into an enjoyable, safe and picturesque hike for everyone".

**Lunch time for the Gold Standard Crew and VI Trail workers. From left to right; sitting is Randy Taylor, standing is Stephen Stirling (Director VITA), sitting is Clark Cameron, standing/foreground is Ivan Whitticase, standing/rear Terry Lewis (Operations Director for VITA).**



## **As Always - An Important Reminder To "Be Safe"!!:**

*"VITA wishes to remind and warn all those considering visiting the VI Trail that the Trail is a "Work in Progress" and that certain portions have yet to be completed, and in some instances may not even be accessible. Travel on the planned Trail is completely at the risk of the individual doing so. Please realize that some sections of the VI Trail are through unpopulated areas where users must be self-reliant with respect to maps and the use of directional equipment, and where wild animals may pose a risk to some types of activities."*

## **VITA'S Vision For a Homegrown Adventure:**

*A signature recreation destination in Canada, the Vancouver Island Trail will span more than 770 km from Victoria to Cape Scott. Traversing both ancient and working forests, and wild coasts, while joining island communities, the Trail in its entirety will be a 2-3 month-long journey. Not just for long distance hikers, day hikers will enjoy many access points. By 2020, Vancouver Island will have a unique recreational opportunity and a showcase for its communities, including highlighting First Nation's Art, Culture, Language, and History.*

*We hope you will visit our website at: [www.vi-trail.ca](http://www.vi-trail.ca)*

*Interested in our map of the VI Trail and links to the various sections: <http://www.vi-trail.ca/map/>*

*Once again, your feedback and offered input is encouraged and valued –*

*Please feel free to contact the Editor, Scott Henley, at:*

*[IslandHikerGuy@GMail.Com](mailto:IslandHikerGuy@GMail.Com)*

## **Want to Get Involved?**

*There are two main ways to help VITA complete the VI Trail:*

*If you wish to become a Volunteer:*

*<http://vi-trail.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>*

*If you don't have any spare time, become a "Friend of the VI Trail":*

*<http://vi-trail.ca/get-involved/friends-of-the-trail/>*

*And help us out with a tax deductible donation*

*Follow VITA Volunteers on Facebook:*

*<https://www.facebook.com/groups/560684427426691/>*