

# FOOTPRINTS ON THE SPINE

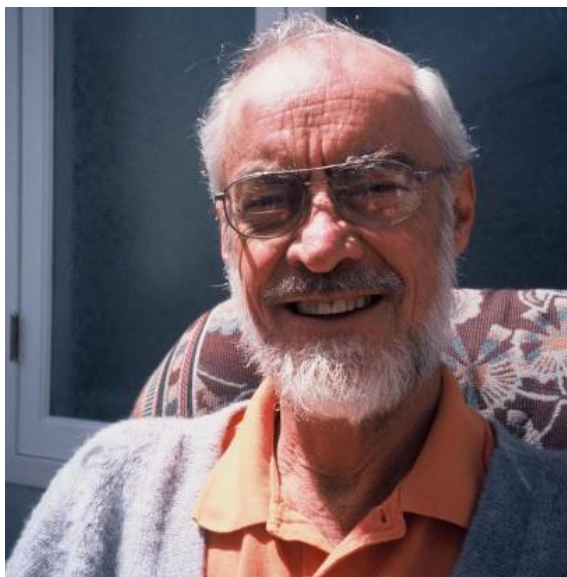


***WWW.VISPINE.CA***  
***SPRING, 2016***

## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

**VISTA'S ANNUAL BOARD MEETING  
TRAIL PROGRESS UPDATE  
FOCUS ON A VISTA BOARD MEMBER  
"SARAH'S SUMMER PLANS"**

### ***VISTA'S 2016 AGM***



**Vista President Gil Parker Addresses Attendees**

Another year, another few steps towards a 700km trail on the island. It was time to update our board and let everyone know how the trail is going.

The Annual General Meeting of the Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association was held on Wednesday, March 9 at 7 PM, at the Swan Lake Nature House in Victoria.

President Gil Parker began his address to attendees with an update on people and organizations during the past year. The Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association has formulated a Board organization document with detailed tasks for directors.

The Board has added the position of Project Coordinator to assist in administration, naming Caroline Williams, Courtenay, to the position. Ken Milbrath was named as Director midway through the year, and has assumed leadership to develop access to First Nations' traditional territories. VISTA continues to work towards gaining access

through privately owned forests. We are planning high-level contacts within these companies, and relying on the successes such as the Cumberland agreement negotiated by the United Riders of Cumberland (UROC) to permit access to private lands.

We have developed a Sponsorship Package for use in raising significant funds, and a meeting is planned following the AGM with a professional fundraiser. Director Peter Berrang, is leading the fundraising initiative.

To improve the quality of our website and to reduce cost, the Board has changed from Nation Builder to WordPress in 2016. This effort was led by Jodi Appleton, with assistance from Ross Collicutt. We have formalized our document storage using Google Drive, and narratives have been added for many new sections of the Trail, referenced to maps on the website.

All field operations have been under direction of Director Terry Lewis of Courtenay, who has not only led negotiations with contractors, forestry licensees, and First Nations, but has also spearheaded the building of significant trails south from Cumberland to the north end of the Beaufort Range. Terry gave a visual picture of some of the challenges of trail building in the North Island following the meeting.

The Vista Board would like to thank retiring director Jodi Appleton for expertise related to outdoor recreation, and her hosting of Board meetings. The entire Board of Vista is to be congratulated on their individual initiatives and efforts, especially Vice President Bill Feyrer, who has taken care of all financial matters, including

reports to CRA to maintain our ability to offer tax receipts to donors, and has assisted me by conducting business meetings for most of the year.

### ***President Gil continued with an update on Trail Progress:***

Perhaps of greatest interest to all who are watching the progress of our trail, is a summary of the status, section by section from south to north. One very quickly realizes that this is a project of major proportions, even though existing trails are used for much of the route.

From Victoria to Lake Cowichan, a short section is required to be built near the territorial boundary between the CRD and the CVRD, near Wrigglesworth Lake. Both regional districts have agreed to complete the work in 2016 for opening in 2017. This is to meet the schedule of the Trans Canada Trail, planned to complete by Canada's 150th anniversary. VI Spine Trail follows the same route as the TCT as far as Lake Cowichan, about 130 km, which incidentally traverses the famous Kinsol trestle.

From Lake Cowichan to the west end of Cowichan Lake we have an obstacle of land access, primarily owned by private forestry companies, issues of which are being addressed. West of the lake, the Tuck Lake section to Francis Lake was built by VISTA volunteers in 2011, after contact with the council of Dididaht First Nation. This trail connects to the Runners Trail, built by members of the Tseshaht First Nation in 2012, in cooperation with the Alberni Clayoquot regional district (ACRD). Further connection to Port Alberni, called the Alberni Inlet Trail, has been completed over the years primarily by the Alberni Valley Outdoor Club,

with some funding from VISTA. President Gil Parker and Director Dave Gilbert attended a formal opening of Stage 2 of the Alberni Inlet Trail in 2015. Dave spoke on behalf of Vista. With minor maintenance requirements, this completes the trail from Cowichan Lake to north of Port Alberni, over 100 km.

The Beaufort Range involves private forestry land access issues. At the north end of the Beaufort, Director Terry Lewis has led the construction of trails to Cumberland. Presently, trail access to Strathcona Park could follow mountain biking trails from Cumberland. The planned route across Strathcona Park uses existing trails past Circler Lake, exiting near Harris Lake. From this point to the Strathcona dam, we have a feasibility study completed that also requires access to privately held land, mainly owned by forestry companies.

The section from Strathcona dam to Schoen Lake is primarily on logging roads, some disused and some semi-active, in areas considered to be traditional lands of First Nations belonging to the Nanwakolus Council. We require only one section of new trail approximately 3 km long, plus overall signage, to complete this 115km section. This will be our focus in 2016.

From the highway near Schoen Lake, across the Bonanza Range to the Nimpkish Lake is a future project over Crown land, probably involving several First Nations' traditional territory. From the north end of Nimpkish Lake to Port Hardy we plan a further project on Crown land, but involving traditional territory of the 'Namgis and Kwakiutl First Nations. We have had a good reception by middle managers but no acceptance (or denial) by elders. Vista has taken the decision to limit our

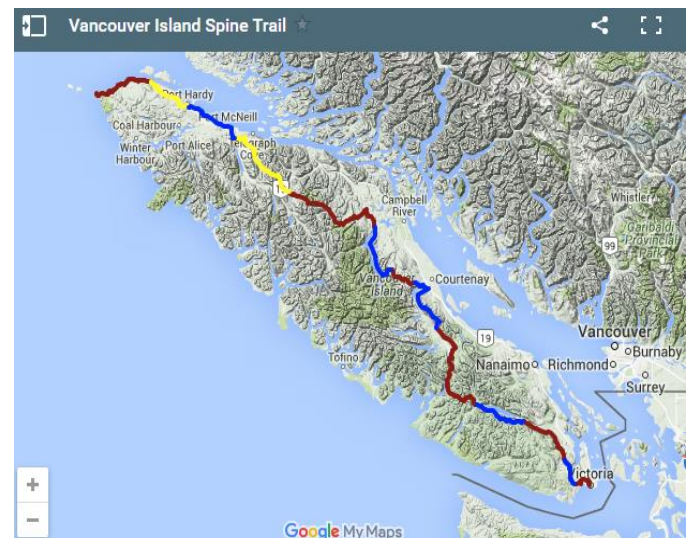
activity on these lands to flagging and route planning until acceptance is confirmed by the First Nations involved. It is hoped that these two sections can be completed in 2016.

Currently, hikers and runners have travelled by commercial boat from Port Hardy to Shushartie Bay before completing the North Coast Trail to Cape Scott. Eventually, a trail will connect to the North Coast Trail.

### ***Gil Summarized:***

In summary, about 44% (320km) of the Trail is passable now, 24% (175km) is delayed because of access problems on private forestry land, and the remainder, 32% (235km) is planned to be finished within the next two years. Not all of the passable Trail is yet flagged, and usable maps still have to be completed.

***Check [www.vispine.ca](http://www.vispine.ca) for this interactive map of the Spine Trail:***



**Your feedback is encouraged and valued – Please contact the Editor, Scott Henley @ [IslandHikerGuy@GMail.Com](mailto:IslandHikerGuy@GMail.Com)**



## **FOCUS ON VISTA'S BOARD MEMBERS**

**In this issue, we continue our focus on one of VISTA's Board Members:**

**Andy Ogle**



Andy's favourite part of Vancouver Island, so far, is Mt. Albert Edward. He's been up it twice — once in summer with Gil Parker, Bill Feyrer and Peter Berrang and once in early spring on skis on an ACC trip led by our former president Andrew Pape Salmon. He says "so far", because clearly there is so much to explore and in the five years since moving here from Edmonton, he's only had a taste. That's one of the reasons Andy is involved with VISTA because it's all about linking great outdoor activities from one end of the Island to the other.

Andy moved to Victoria in 2009 after retiring from a career in daily newspaper journalism — 10 years at the Lethbridge Herald in southern Alberta and more than 25 years at the Edmonton Journal. In Andy's words.... "I'm a runner, enthusiastic hiker, cross-country and back-country skier and am keen to help make more of the VI Spine trail a reality.

I'm married with one son who works in the music-streaming business (Spotify) in New York City. He's been there just over a year after 10 years in London, England. We will visit the Big Apple in April, the first time for my wife and my first time in 27 years. Back here in Victoria, I've been a volunteer with the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific for the last five years, and with the Oak Bay Volunteer Service. In Edmonton I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and made three Global Village trips to Mexico, Nicaragua and Honduras. I also did a stint here at the Habitat for Humanity Restore".

## **WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER??**

**See, in her own words, what Sarah Seeds of Courtenay has planned for her summer:**

### **WHAT I am up to:**

*"This year I will be exploring the Vancouver Island Spine Trail through multiple ultra running adventures, with the goal of raising awareness about VISTA and their epic 700km Vancouver Island Spine Trail vision. As the snow melts and new sections of trail are completed, I will be running deeper and deeper into the heart of Vancouver Island on the Spine Trail. I will be documenting each leg and creating trail reports to help you plan and complete your own adventures on the Spine Trail."*

### **WHY I am doing this:**

*"Once completed, the Vancouver Island Spine Trail will create a lasting legacy for islanders and adventurers from around the world. The Vancouver Island Spine Trail will travel 700kms down the length of Vancouver Island, from Cape Scott provincial park in the north to the capitol city of Victoria, in the south. The trail will take explorers deep into the heart of the island and provide access to some of the most beautiful wild spaces that*

*exists anywhere in the world. This trail will travel along wild coastlines, over alpine ridges, through ancient forests and it will connect the diverse communities that stitch this amazing island together. Once complete, this trail will truly be legendary. I cannot wait to experience it and share it with you!"*

*"The [Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association](#), VISTA, has been dedicated to creating this epic trail for many years and they are getting very close to completing the project. They need our support to make it happen. If you value wilderness, exploration and getting outside to play on this beautiful island I would like to ask you to help VISTA in one of three ways"...*

- 1. Support.** Make a donation to the non-profit, VISTA, to help them cover expenses associated with creating the Spine Trail. From trail location and building to education and ongoing fees there are many expenses and very few resources available. [Click HERE to make a donation](#) if you can! Or, sign up to volunteer your time to one of VISTA's exciting 2016 projects! They are in need of volunteers to help with a range of projects including building sections of trail and boots on the ground [Click HERE to sign up as a volunteer!](#)
- 2. Share.** Spread the word to your friends and family about the great work that VISTA is doing on the Spine Trail! The bigger we can build our community of VISTA supporters, the faster this trail will be completed. Share this post on your Facebook page, Twitter Feed or on your own Blog etc to help us get the word out about this awesome project. As a community, we can make this happen! Follow [VISTA on Facebook](#). You can do this right now and help make a difference with the click of a mouse!
- 3. Explore.** Dream it, plan it and then do it! Get your own Spine Trail adventure under way this year! Check out the Spine Trail Map at the bottom of the page to start your planning. Take on sections of the trail that inspire you - from the accessible bike/horse

trails on the Trans Canada portion in the south to the rugged section that follows the North Coast Trail to Cape Scott, there are endless possibilities for exploration on the Spine Trail. Take the challenge on your own and tackle sections of the trail on your own, with a friend or as a family! [Click HERE to explore the VISTA map page](#) and watch for my trail reports to help you plan your next adventure on the trail.

You can reach or join Sarah at:

<http://wildseeds.blogspot.ca/p/explorevispine.html>

**And follow Sarah as she explores The Spine!**



### **An important reminder:**

***"Vista wishes to remind and warn all those considering visiting the Spine 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 Spine 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."***