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236 Superior Street
Victoria, British Columbia
V8V 1T3

News Release

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Cowichan Lake: Earth Day was celebrated by the Outdoor Club of Victoria by announcing that the club has received a grant of \$20,000 from the government of British Columbia. The Outdoor Club of Victoria was founded in 1942 and the government marked its 75th year with the special grant. The money is to be used for the construction of the Vancouver Island Spine Trail which will go from Victoria to Cape Scott. The trail is more than seventy per cent complete.

OCV President Liz Bicknell presented the money to the executive of the Vancouver Island Spine Trail. "Hiking is an activity which is enjoyed by people of all ages. The new trail will be used by people with different hiking abilities, plus it will become an asset for the whole island", said Bicknell. "Eventually it will become a hiking trail comparable to the Pacific Crest or El Camino", added Bicknell.

VISTA is a group of volunteers who have been constructing the non-motorized trail which is for hikers, cyclists and equestrians. "The trail will be used to help link the Cowichan River section west and north to Port Alberni," said Gil Parker, past president of VISTA. More specifically, "we are committed to the south route around Cowichan Lake. There are a number of short trails that can be used in combination with existing roads and ultimately with logging roads to reach the western end of Cowichan Lake. At that point we connect with the Tuck Lake trail, Runners trail, and Alberni Inlet Trail to reach Port Alberni," added Parker. These new funds can be used to improve these linkages, to upgrade sections of the Tuck Lake and Runners trails, and to the partial seed funding towards bridge construction over the Franklin River."

The Outdoor Club of Victoria has a history of building trails. The steps at Goldstream Park were constructed in the 1990s by the club. The club offers hikes of various levels around Victoria. Hikers from Duncan, Port Alberni and the Cowichan area were invited to join the celebration. A hike up Bald Mountain concluded the event.

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Media Contact: Liz Bicknell, President
Outdoor Club of Victoria, 250 686-5840

Media Contact: Ross Collicutt, Director, Communications
Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association, communications@vispine.ca

