



COWICHAN LAKE REGION

HIKING & CYCLING TOURISM ACTION PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Consulting Team extends its heartfelt appreciation to Community Futures Cowichan for its leadership, direction and commitment to community development. In undertaking this project, Community Futures Cowichan has empowered Cowichan Lake Region community members to secure a more socially and economically prosperous future through thoughtful tourism development. This Action Plan would not be possible without the support of Cowichan Economic Development, the Town of Lake Cowichan, Lake Cowichan First Nation, and the many active community members who contributed their time, energy and ideas to the project.

Last but not least, we thank the BC Rural Dividend Fund, the Island Coastal Economic Trust, Cowichan Economic Development and Community Futures Cowichan for their generous financial contributions to this initiative.



LAKE COWICHAN
FIRST NATION



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What We Were Asked to Do

Community Futures Cowichan Region, the Cowichan Valley Regional District and other project partners have commissioned this Tourism Action Plan (the Plan) focused on hiking and cycling for the Cowichan Lake Region. This Plan will guide the development of tourism by fostering a more collaborative business community, cultivating a more robust tourism identity based around the region's assets and clearly articulating a path for increasing the economic and social benefits of tourism.

Specifically, the Action Plan includes:

- An inventory and analysis of the study area's tourism assets
- An assessment of hiking, cycling, and touring & exploring target markets
- Best practice examples of tourism trail experiences locally and internationally
- An experience gap analysis
- Recommendations and analysis of potential infrastructure investments
- Business development and industry engagement recommendations,
- Marketing recommendations
- Comprehensive Action Plan for hiking and cycling tourism development

This Plan is accompanied by a previously-prepared Current Situation report, which outlined tourism demand, supply and competitive conditions in the Cowichan Lake Region and summarized stakeholder and community outreach feedback on how best to develop trail tourism in the future.

1.2 How We Approached the Work

The work undertaken in compiling this Plan included primary and secondary research as well as a comprehensive engagement process. A leadership team brought together to oversee the work program, collaborated with local stakeholders and key informants familiar with tourism and trails destination development.

The major work phases are shown in Figure 1.

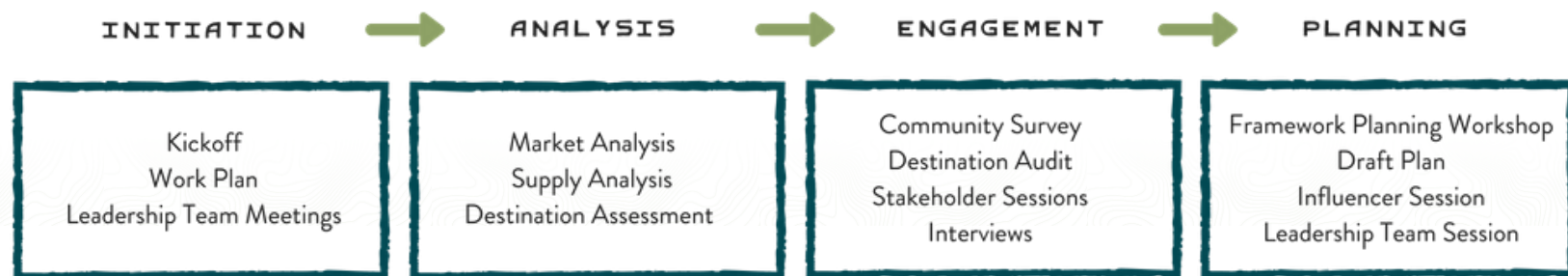


Figure 1. Cowichan Lake Region Hiking and Cycling Tourism Action Plan Work Program

The kickoff meeting at Community Futures offices in Duncan was followed by the preparation of a work plan and one-on-one interviews with the Leadership Team a diverse mix of local stakeholders who provided oversight and feedback to the consulting team during the course of the project. The analysis phase entailed research on tourism supply and demand-side conditions in the Cowichan Lake Region as well as an evaluation of competitiveness and service/product gaps. The engagement program included: a community survey answered by 200 respondents; a destination audit of another 95 respondents; three stakeholder sessions involved over 60 participants; and a community drop in session that drew over 100 people.

1.3 The Reference Area

This Action Plan provides the Cowichan Lake Region with a focused destination development plan for growing the economic and social benefits of tourism through the hiking and cycling sub-sectors. The Cowichan Lake Region is comprised of the Town of Lake Cowichan, Electoral Area I, Electoral Area F, and the Lake Cowichan First Nation Indian Reserve. The Region includes municipal land, First Nations land, Regional Parks, Provincial Park, and a significant amount of private land owned predominantly by TimberWest, Island Timberlands, and the Hancock Timber Resource Group.

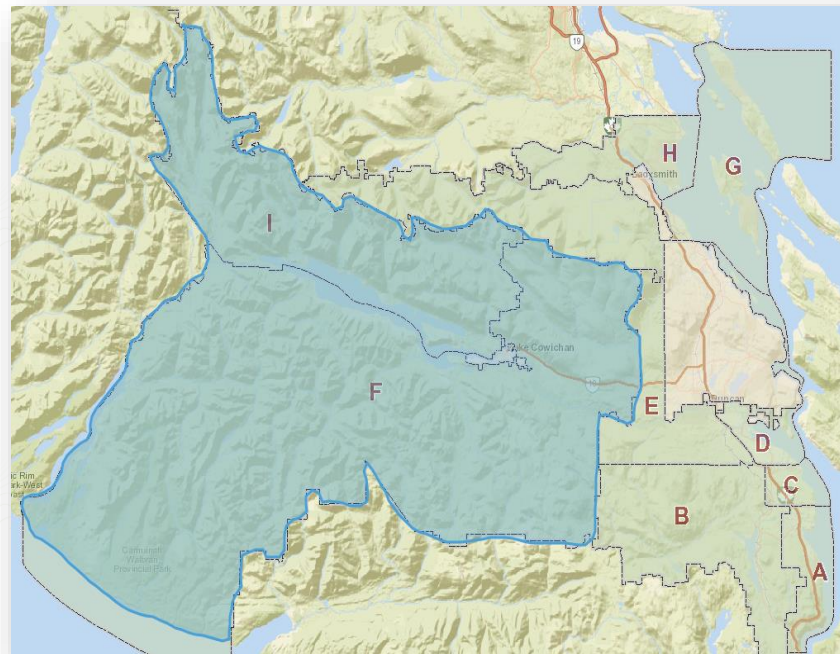


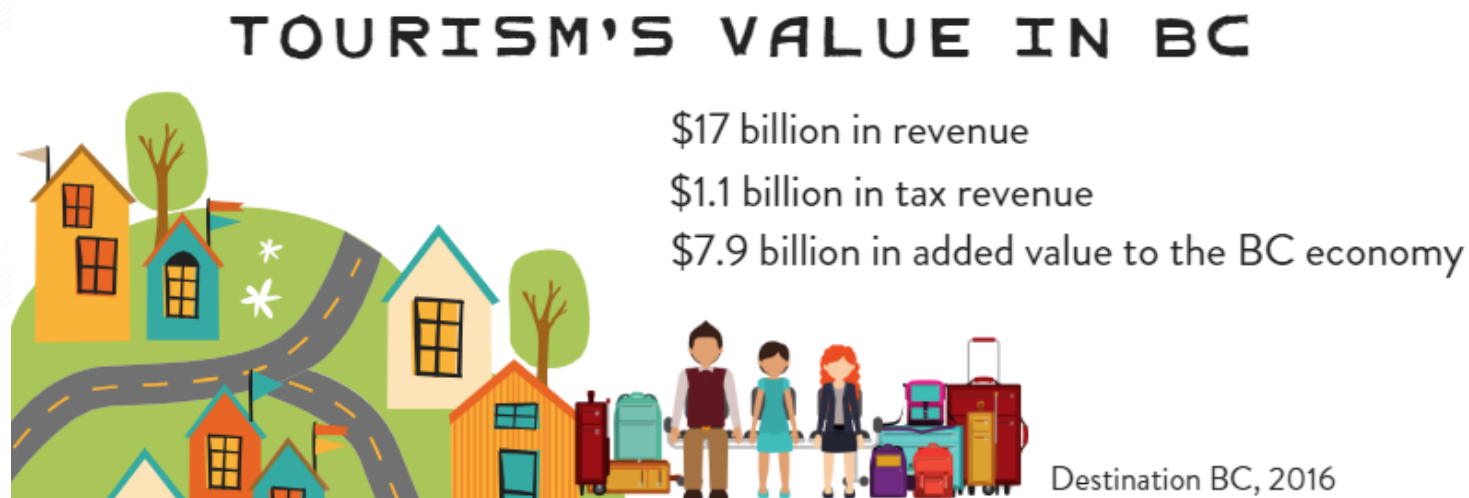
Figure 2. Map of the Reference Area – Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD Electoral Area I and CVRD Electoral Area F, Lake Cowichan First Nation

1.4 Operating Context

1.4.1 Tourism and Economic Development

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. In British Columbia, tourism generates \$17 billion in revenue and contributed \$7.9 billion of value to the BC economy. Tourism contributed more to GDP than almost any other primary resource industry including mining at \$4.1 billion, forestry and logging at \$2.0 billion, and agriculture and fish at \$1.5 billion. The only exception is the oil and gas extraction industry at \$8.2 billion. With tourism's growth expected to continue, communities across the province are recognizing tourism's potential to positively impact local economies and quality of life.

The Cowichan Lake Region is uniquely positioned to increase local economic activity and quality of life through well-planned tourism experience development. As identified by residents, the Region's greatest assets are its lakes, rivers, mountains, forests and other natural assets. While existing tourism experiences draw visitors during peak summer months, the coordinated development of trail experiences is an opportunity to increase the inventory of remarkable experiences and increase visitation in the shoulder seasons.



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1.4.2 An Overview of Demand Factors

Hiking Market Segments	Size	Characteristics
Elite Hikers	94,131 BC households (5%) Highest concentration in North Vancouver	Wealthy, upper class couples and families 45-64 years old Destination hikers Moderate media & social media users Motivated by wildlife viewing, local cultures, small towns and places less travelled Typically avoid luxury accommodations – prefer hotels, motels and camping
Suburban Outdoor Enthusiasts	223,844 BC households (11.8%) Highest concentration in Kelowna and Maple Ridge	Middle class couples and families 45-54 years old Moderate media & social media users Enjoy exploring natural environments and urban areas Often take shorter trips that are closer to home and allow personal flexibility Enjoy camping, staying with family, homestays and reasonably priced hotels and motels
Rustic Adventurers	172,235 BC households (9.1%) Highest concentration in Revelstoke and Chilliwack	Couples and families with older children Destination hikers Light media users Below average mobile phone users and moderate social media users Travel to gain a better understanding of their own culture and heritage Seek comfort, safety and style while traveling, often staying in branded

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Hiking Market

The hiking tourism market is comprised of destination hikers and the touring & exploring market. Destination hikers visit destinations with hiking as their primary trip motivator. Touring & exploring visitors enjoy hiking as a complementary activity while in a destination, but hiking is not their primary trip motivator. The development of exceptional hiking experiences in the Cowichan Lake Region will draw both destination hikers and touring & exploring visitors.

The following table shows three hiking target markets and their characteristics. These market segments were identified through PRIZM, a segmentation tool that categorizes households into specific consumer segments based on postal codes. PRIZM allows for focused and evidence-based consumer marketing efforts.

Cycling Market

Cycling tourism is an emerging sub-sector that has a demonstrated potential to support economic and social development in rural communities. Perhaps even more so than hiking, cycling attracts a high yield, diverse range of visitors who visit communities longer and bring fresh dollars into the communities they visit.⁷ The Vancouver Island Region is already recognized as a premier cycling destination known for world class mountain biking, touring, and road cycling. As Vancouver Island's cycling experiences continue to grow in popularity, there are opportunities for the Cowichan Lake Region to develop new visitor experiences around cycling for the benefit of residents and businesses.

The following table shows three hiking target markets and their characteristics. These market segments were identified through PRIZM, a segmentation tool that categorizes households into specific consumer segments based on postal codes. PRIZM allows for focused and evidence-based consumer marketing efforts.

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Cycling Market Segments	Size	Characteristics
Elite Bikers	213,132 BC households (11.2%) Highest concentration in North Vancouver and Surrey	Wealthy, upper class couples and families 45-64 years old Will travel to cycle Moderate media & social media users Motivated by wildlife viewing, local cultures, small towns and places less travelled Typically avoid luxury accommodations – prefer hotels, motels and camping
Outdoor Enthusiasts	176,899 BC households (9.3%) Highest concentration in Kelowna and Nanaimo	Middle class couples and families; younger individuals 25-34 and 45-54 years old Moderate media & social media users Enjoy traveling to visit the same destination on multiple trips, enjoy familiar surroundings, but willing explore new areas of note Prefer luxury experiences and branded accommodations
Diverse Cyclists	317,602 BC households (16.8%) Highest concentration in Surrey and Vancouver	Middle aged affluent couples and families Higher minority status Average media users, mobile phone users and social media users Thrill-seekers who seek the best and most remarkable experiences that they can afford Often stay in luxury hotels, but willing to camp especially if at a unique campsite

1.4.3 An Overview of Supply Conditions

A trail destination audit was carried out during the engagement process. It involved 47 questions grouped into seven main elements, asking respondents to rate each question on a 1 to 5 basis with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. The higher the score, the more positive respondents feel about a particular element. A total of 73 people from the Cowichan Lake area responded to the audit survey.

- Transportation and access, tourism support services, the state of the local tourism industry and cultural/heritage assets were all ranked relatively high.
- The state of the trails themselves was given a slightly lower score, mainly due to a lack of consistent maintenance, signage and amenities.
- The lowest score was accorded to Natural Assets, not because they don't exist, but because they are not protected and free and open access is not ensured. This of course refers to the fact that most trails and the majority of the surrounding forested land base is private property, which presents unique challenges in the province BC where the majority of trail systems are on the Crown land base.

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY SUB ELEMENTS

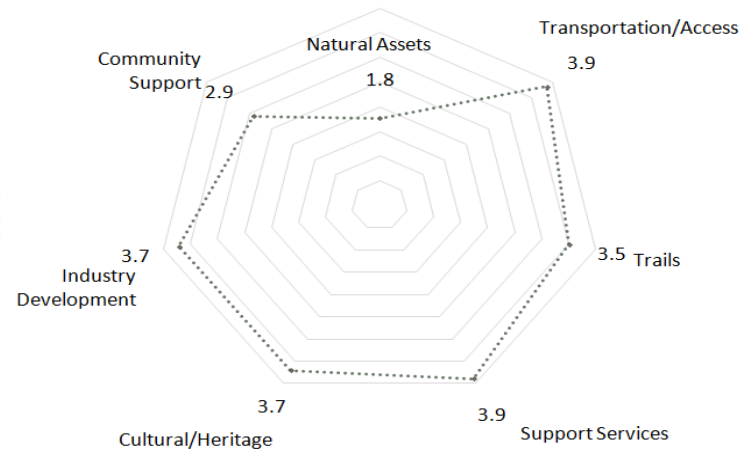


Figure 3. Community Audit Results

1.4.4 The Competitive Position of Cowichan Lake Region

The key strengths of the Lake Cowichan Region are its natural assets, and its tourism services clustered around camping, lake activities and river activities in the summer months. In terms of weaknesses, the trails are not managed or promoted to a consistent set of standards and there is a lack of exceptional visitor experiences. Exceptional refers to experiences that stand apart, that visitors will promote and brag about to their friends, on social media and through online platforms like Trip Advisor. The West Coast Trail, Juan de Fuca Provincial Park and Pacific Marine Circle Route can all be considered exceptional based on customers reviews.

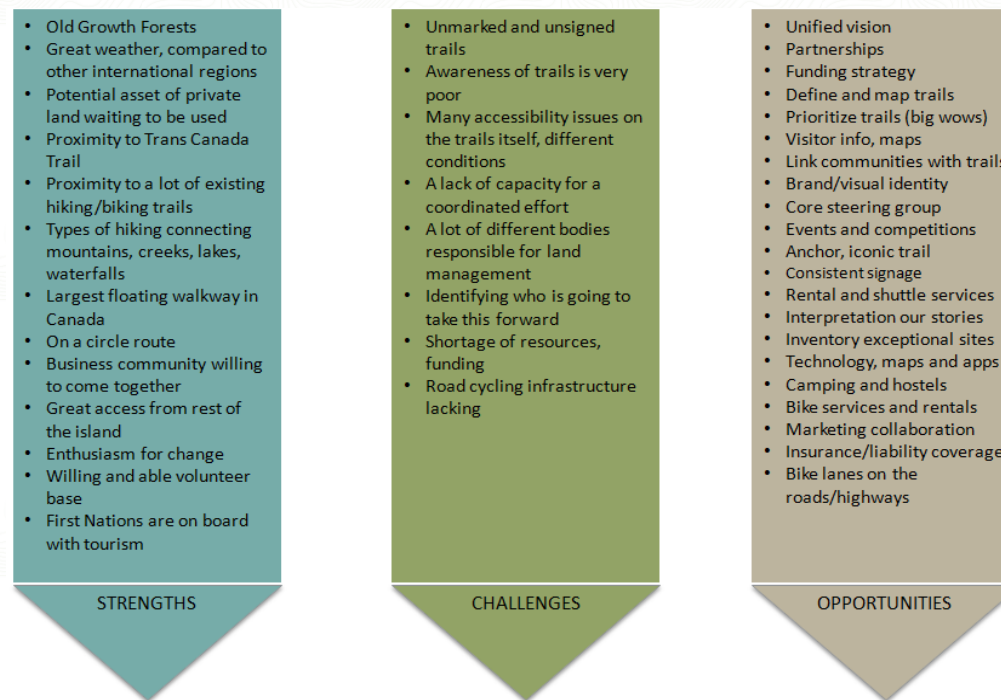


Figure 4. Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

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The preponderance of private land also presents trail management issues. The opportunities are really about shaping the trails, features and services that already exist into a cohesive, consistent and accessible set of trail experiences by adopting best practices in trail management, infrastructure placement and enhanced visitor services.



Figure 5. The Unique Attributes of the Cowichan Lake Area

The Cowichan Lake Region has the opportunity to develop a unique selling proposition (USP) to differentiate itself as a destination by going beyond the provision of mere physical trails to include a story-based brand that takes advantage of its cultural heritage values. Differentiation is a very important strategic direction because there is an expanding list of trail destinations around the developed world that are all competing for similar markets and similar types of visitors. This is not to say that the physical nature of trails and the surrounding landscape are not important, but that the challenge of standing out from the crowd will require some forethought about how the region can be positioned differently from the average. The destination brand should describe this uniqueness for the marketplace and create a sense of interest and anticipation that induces trip decisions. As discussed in the engagement sessions, the wildlife, rainforest, wilderness and sustainability are not special to this region; in fact, they can be claimed by many other competing areas inside and outside BC. However, very few trail destinations

are weaving local stories, characters, traditions and flavours into trail activities to create more extraordinary experiences. Perhaps the most successful in the BC context are the several wine and food trails in the Okanagan. The Living Forestry and Indigenous stories are perhaps the most compelling for a USP. As this project progresses and new experiences are developed, project partners will need to re-evaluate the Cowichan Lake Region's USP and promise to visitors on an ongoing basis.

1.5 Why Trail Tourism Makes Sense

As an economic base sector that creates community wealth (just like forestry, manufacturing and other export activities), tourism is critical to the region's economy. Over the last three decades, manufacturing and other goods production have fallen significantly in the local area. Tourism occupies a smaller role than forestry does, but it has exceptional growth prospects. Moreover, it is highly amenable to local control, contributes to local quality of life, benefits from and contributes to environmental and sustainability objectives, aligns with heritage and cultural values and will continue to remain viable as an economic target over the long term.



Figure 6. How Tourism Supports Community and Economic Development

1.6 Why Trail Tourism is Right for Cowichan Lake Area

As shown in Figure 8, there is a good fit between trail tourism as an economic development focus and the Cowichan Lake Area, from an economic as well as a community benefits standpoint. The economic base of the region is changing, with forestry and manufacturing activity being replaced by knowledge-led and tourism services. In order to tap into these growth sectors, the Cowichan Lake Area will have to take advantage of its strategic assets, many of which favour trail tourism. The case studies demonstrate that this can be done in small communities and that the benefits can be wide ranging. It is not just tourism that generates the economic impacts, either. Growing destinations like Squamish and Fernie have fledgling high-tech sectors where young entrepreneurs are attracted by recreational and cultural amenities that provide a well-rounded quality of life. Affordable real estate makes the destination more attractive. The Cowichan Lake Area offers all these advantages and would greatly benefit from the diversification potential of trail tourism, providing it can leverage its assets with compelling experiences.

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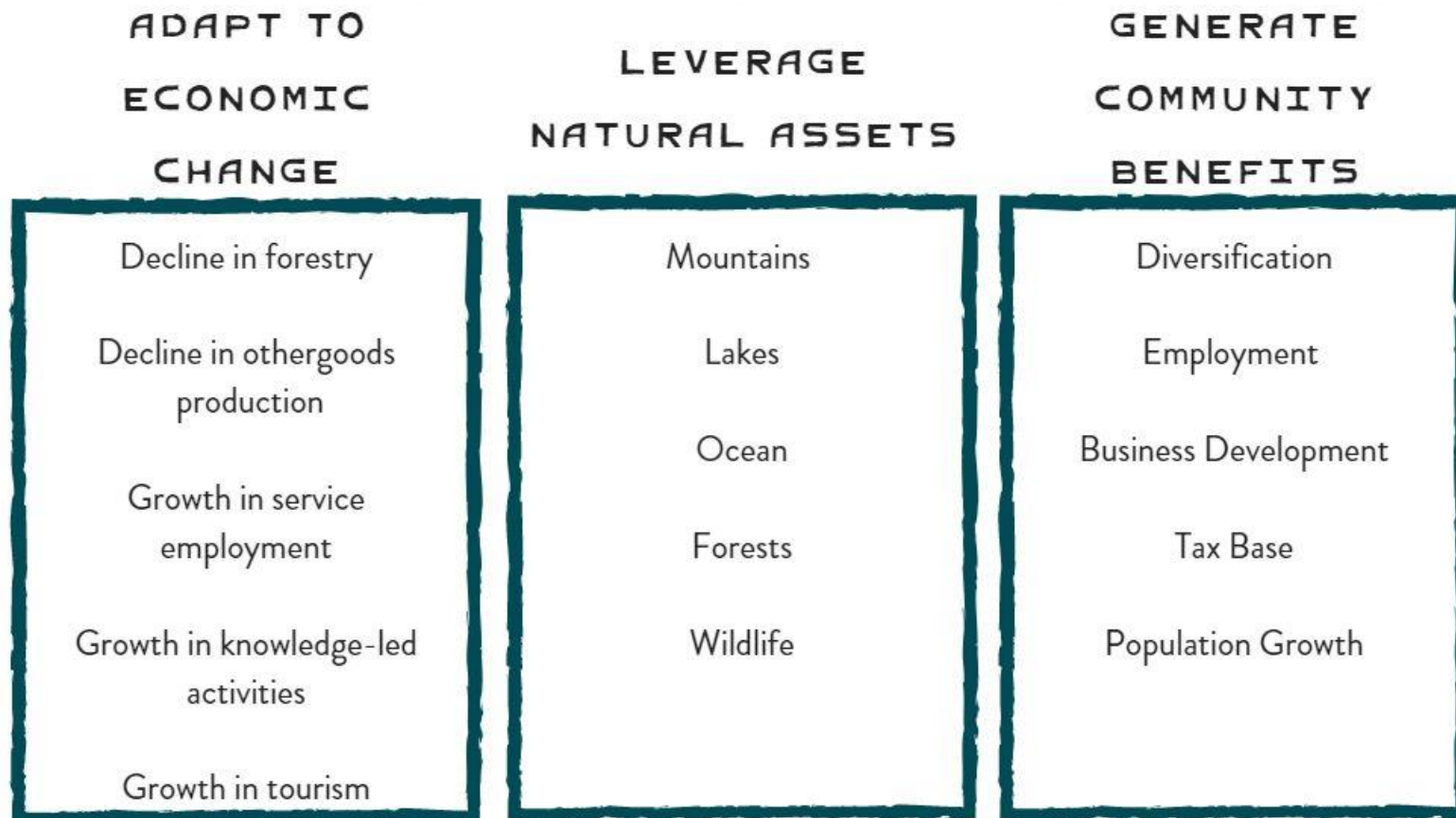


Figure 7. The Economic Dimensions of Trail Tourism in the Cowichan Lake Area

1.7 What the Cowichan Lake Area has to do to Create Experiences

The Cowichan Lake area has the attributes on which to build a trail product. It has the setting, visitor activities and many of the services and amenities that visitors are seeking. In order to generate more benefits, it must fill in the service gaps and then create packages and experiences that are going to make it a go-to destination.

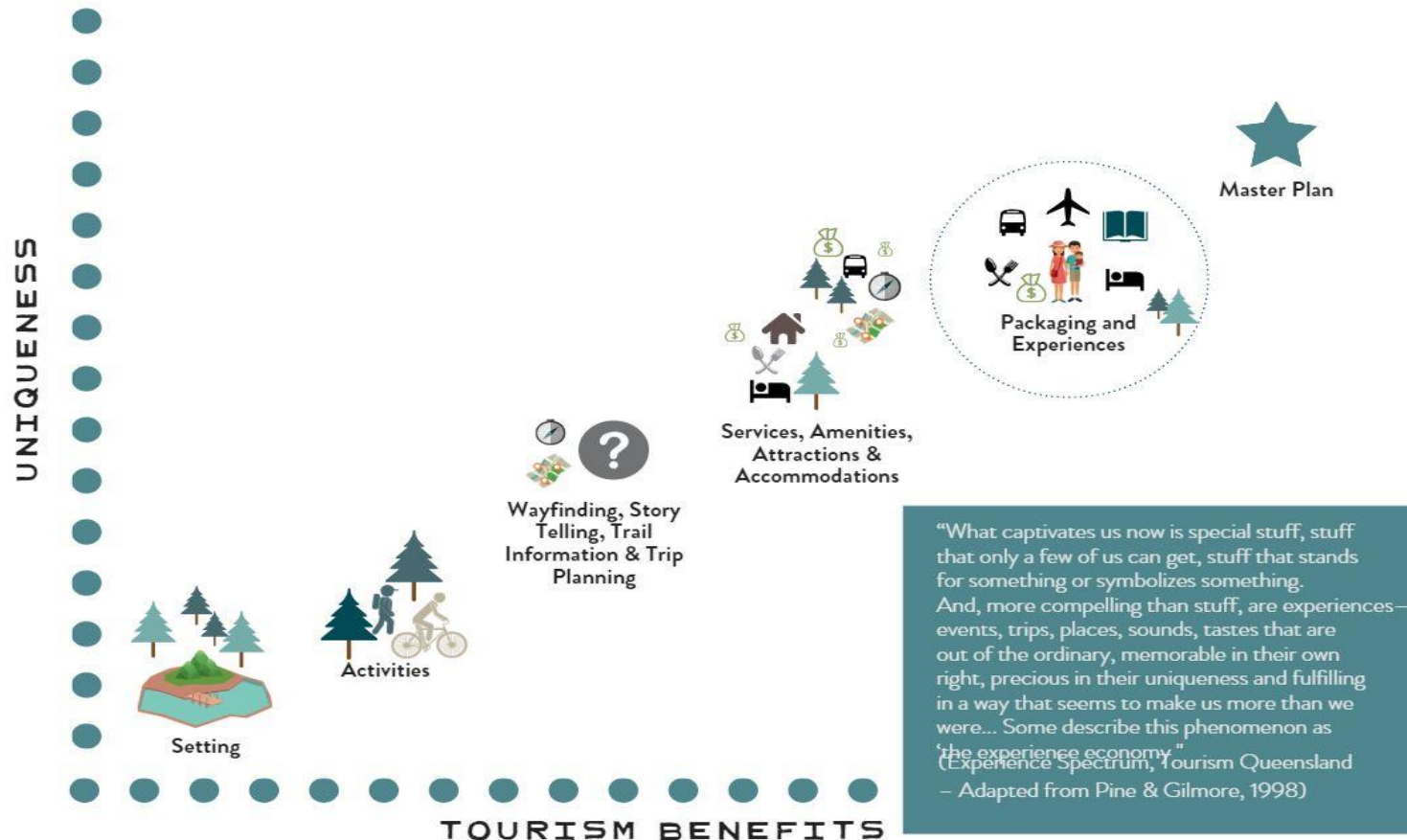


Figure 8. Developing world-class trails destination is a process of leveraging natural assets and creating remarkable experiences

2. PLAN DIRECTION

Vision

The Cowichan Lake region has a thriving and robust trail culture built upon community, industry and government collaboration and productive partnerships. Trail groups have successfully adopted best practices to ensure resources are efficiently used and benefit residents as well as visitors.

The trail system accommodates all users and successfully links communities, natural assets and history in interesting and entertaining ways. The trail network is unique because it brings users closer to nature while at the same time experiencing the historical and culture roots through interpretive signage and sites. The trails are well marked, maintained and safe for multiple uses. Users have access to real-time information about the trails and the experience that can be expected.

Together with the diverse selection of visitor services, accommodation, culinary options and entertainment, the trails have contributed to the region's new-found vibrancy as a visitor destination. Visitor awareness and participation in trail activities has been buoyed by signature hiking and cycling events.

2.1 Guidelines

The guidelines for this Plan have been drawn from the feedback provided in the engagement sessions. The following statements will guide how actions can be structured through Plan implementation. They capture good practices in tourism planning and strive to link trail initiatives to the broader economic development and tourism context in the Cowichan Lake Region. They can also serve as common ground for the many partners who will be involved in strategic initiatives, leading to more consistent, predictable and effective results for the community.

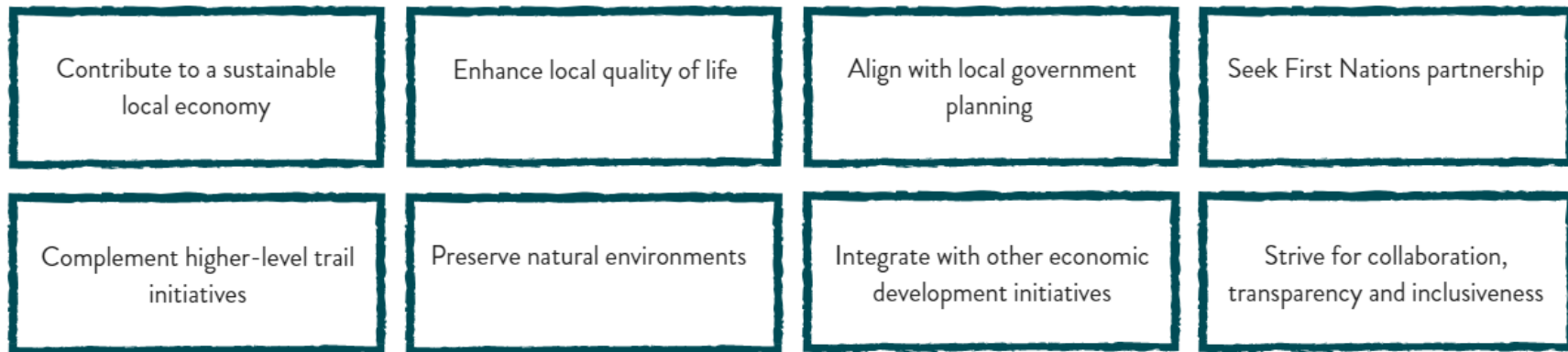


Figure 9. Guidelines for a Cowichan Lake Trail Strategy

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2.2 Focus Areas and Goals

If the Cowichan Lake Region is to develop as a trails destination as described in the vision statement, then it is important to articulate goals that can act as the guideposts for strategic action.

The five goals, identified during the community engagement process, include:

- the creation of market-ready trails;
- increased trail use (by residents and visitors);
- increased visitation and visitor spending;
- a strong base of community support; and
- a vibrant local trail culture.

The four focus areas, Organization, Infrastructure and Support, Experiences and Marketing, represent functional areas into which strategies are clustered.



Figure 10. Focus Area and Goals

3. THE PLAN IN BRIEF

The four focus areas and the associated strategies are shown below. It will be important to pursue all focus areas simultaneously to ensure an overall coordinated effort and also prioritize organizational tasks that will provide support for the other three focus areas.

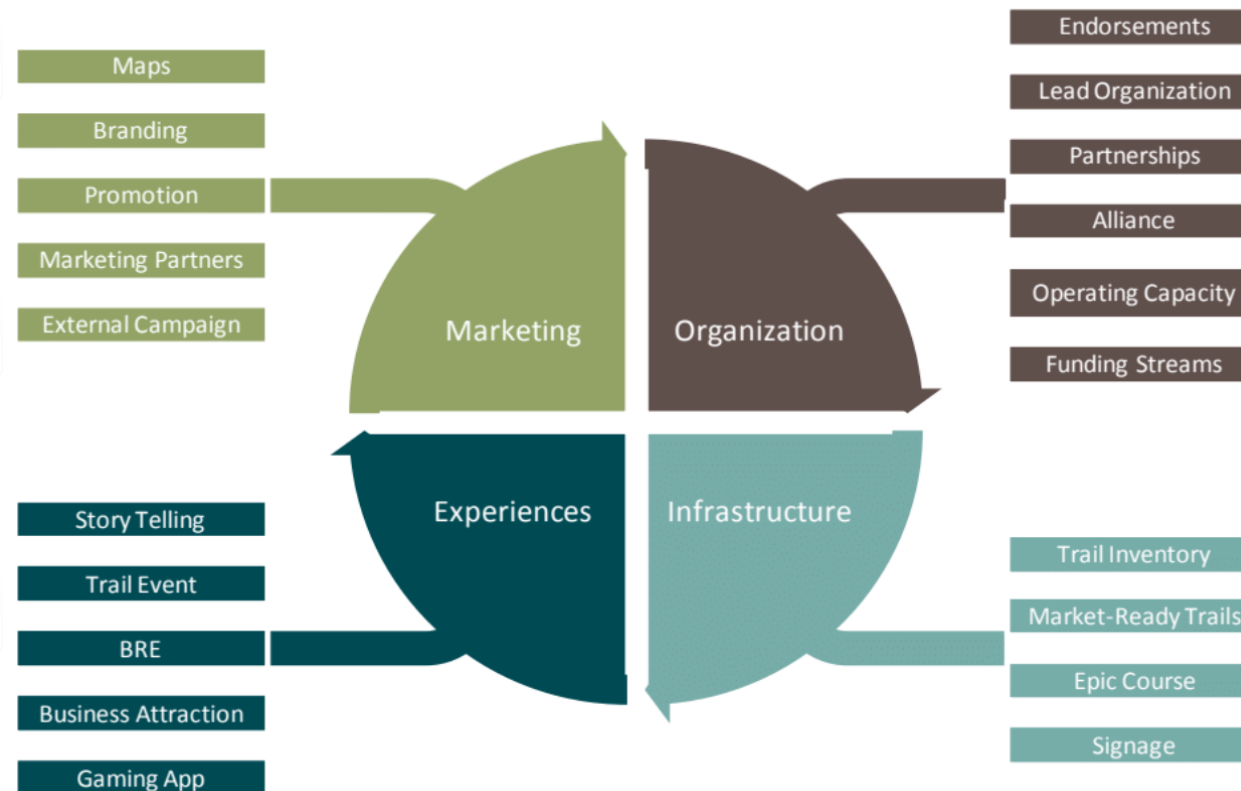


Figure 11. Overview of Initiatives by Focus Area

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	LCFN	CVRD	TLC	TVI	CTSS	TCS	CLDCC	Prov	Assn
Endorsement	•	•	•	•			•	•	•
Lead organization		•	•						
Partnerships		•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Alliance	•			•		•			
Operating capacity					•				•
Funding streams			•					•	•
Trail inventory	•	•			•				
Market-ready trails	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
Epic trail	•	•	•	•	•				•
Signage	•	•	•	•	•				•
Story telling	•	•	•	•		•			•
Trail event		•	•	•		•	•		
Business development				•		•	•	•	
Investment attraction	•	•	•			•	•	•	
Gaming application				•		•	•	•	
Maps	•	•	•			•			
Branding			•			•			
Promotions			•			•			
Marketing partners	•		•	•		•			
External campaign			•	•		•			

Figure 12. Overview of Initiatives by Key Organization

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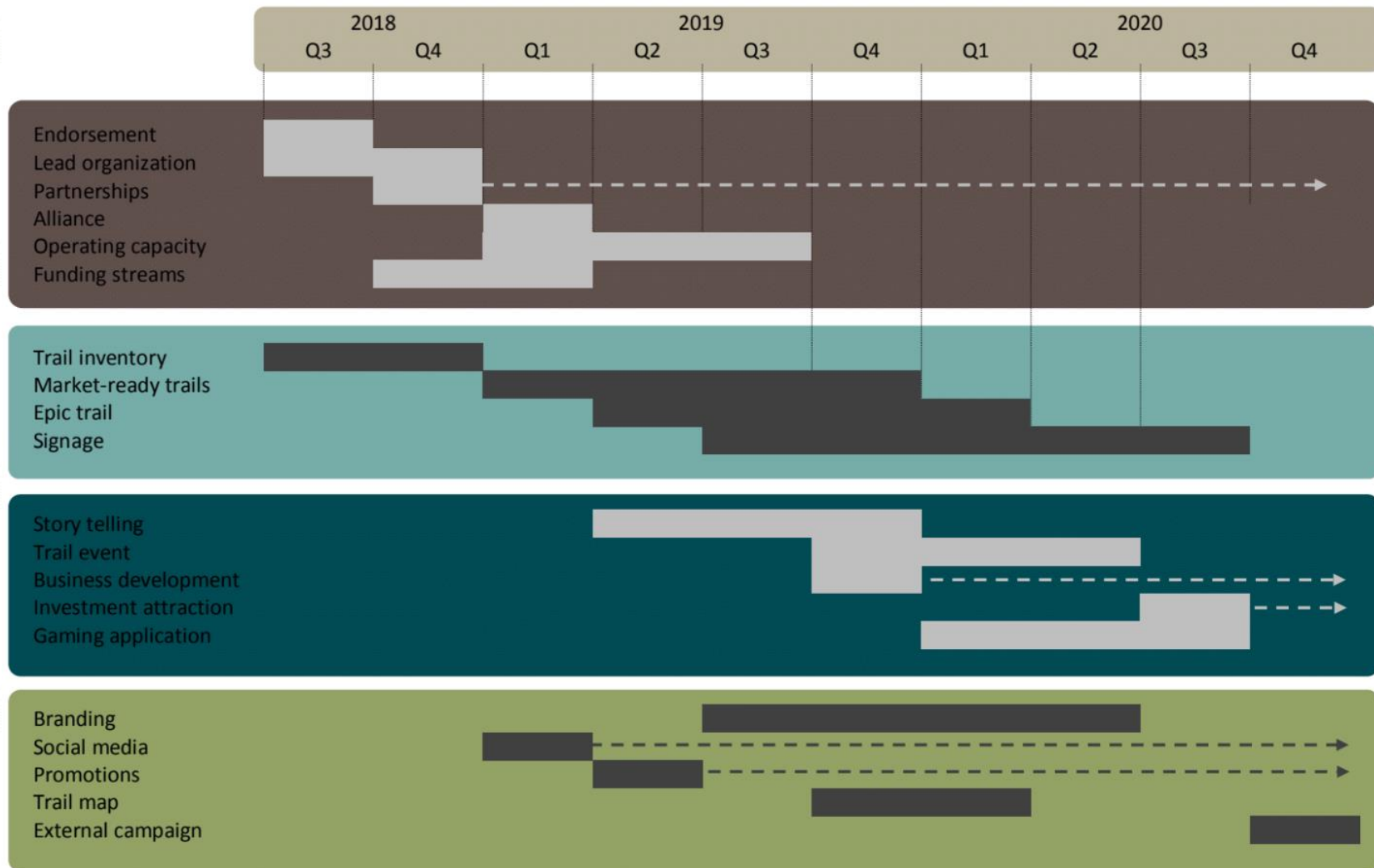




Figure 13. Overview of Initiatives Timeline^[1]

4. THE PLAN IN FULL

4.1 Layout of the Plan

Focus Area	<i>One of the four development themes in the plan</i>		
Strategy	<i>Strategy statement</i>		
Actions	<i>Initiatives that will contribute to achievement of the strategy</i>		
Priority	<i>High – top priority, critical impact</i>		
	<i>Medium – moderate priority and impact</i>		
	<i>Flex – strategy important but may require repositioning as time, resources and partnerships allow</i>		
Start-End	<i>Beginning Quarter and Year – Completion Quarter and Year</i>		
Resources			\$
	Major Time Commitment	Minor Time Commitment	Cash Costs Applicable

4.2 Organizing for Implementation


A strategy or action plan should be firmly set in the context of implementation, that is, with clear reference to roles, responsibilities, timing, resource requirements and other aspects required to induce action and ensure follow-through. This Plan is being sponsored by Community Futures Cowichan, the Cowichan Valley Regional District and other partner agencies and while each has a role to play in implementation and oversight, none are equipped or resourced to lead the Plan as a whole. But there are many other players, among them First Nations, local and provincial government, trail stewards and private landowners, who could and should be involved in trail development if it, and the Plan, is to realize their full potential. Most importantly, the community itself must be involved, engaged and supportive.

In other jurisdictions around the world, the legal, land use and planning context for trails can differ dramatically, but the one common bond of successful trail destinations is a cohesive, coherent organizational plan that is able to bring together the players in a coordinated fashion. Importantly, local government is more likely to provide their support if community support is evident.

Managing and supporting multiple courses of action among many different organizations who have a stake in trail development can be complex and sometimes frustrating. Partners will not be bound to implement initiatives contained in this Plan, but of course will be strongly encouraged to be involved. Their commitment, participation and, ideally, ownership will depend on a lead organization that is positioned for success.


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1. Obtain Plan endorsements from local government <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circulate the Plan's Executive Summary to local government, including Lake Cowichan First Nation.• Clarify the "ask": active support and participation in Plan implementation.• Request an appearance before the respective councils/boards to present the Plan.• Seek motions to receive and file the information and refer, if necessary, to administration.	Priority:	High	
	Partners:	TLC, LCFN, CVRD, CLDCC, SD 79	
	Start-end:	Q3 18 – Q3 18	
	Resources:		--


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2. Create a lead organization	Priority:	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the consensus at the planning workshop that a legal society is the preferred entity to undertake Plan implementation. The society can be established under the BC Society Act, something that is administratively simple, low cost and amenable to achieving community buy-in and acceptance. A non-profit society has flexibility and scalability in retaining surpluses for future trail programs without risk of tax implications, as would be the case of a for-profit company. Form an Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) from the Leadership Team, which can serve as the interim Board of Directors of the Society. Prepare necessary documentation prior to filing for incorporation. This includes verifying the availability of the legal name, selecting a legal address, specifying the terms and conditions of membership, preparing the constitution and bylaws, and outlining board structure. Directors must also be elected. Once the incorporation is completed, the Society should prepare a Policies and Procedures manual and a Resource Guide for the Board of Directors that outlines the legal context (e.g. articles of incorporation, constitution, bylaws), organizational details (e.g. list of directors, employees if any, meeting calendar) and financial terms. Implement a leadership training program for the IAC and the Board so they are equipped to undertake their executive responsibilities and guide and support the Plan. 	Partners:	CFC, CVRD, TLC
	Start-end:	Q3 18 – Q4 18
	Resources:	<div>  </div> <div>\$</div>

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3. Cultivate partnerships that will contribute to implementation capacity, adoption of good practices and community/stakeholder support	Priority:	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and nurture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic alliances are core partnerships that are trail or user based, which have a strong alignment of values, interests, visions and goals. Examples of potential alliance partners would be Trails BC, the Trans Canada Trail Society, the Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association (VISTA) and local clubs and stewards. All forms of trail use should be represented if possible, including motorized and equestrian. ○ Partnerships based on broader shared interests in tourism, recreation, economic and community development. ○ Partnerships based on access to and use of land, including private land owners. ● Build a relationship with Cowichan Trail Stewardship Society (CTVSS) and learn from their expertise. ● Prepare a membership dossier that outlines partners' motivations and interests, their strengths and weaknesses and the potential for future joint action. Specifically identify where partnership initiatives can be leveraged in the Cowichan Lake region. ● Scope out the guidelines and expected outcomes for a partnership with TimberWest with the intention of signing an MOU for the development of trails on its land. The company was involved in the engagement sessions for this project and has acknowledged the potential for trail use. The next step would be to propose changes and improvements to specific trails and use areas. 	Partners:	CVRD, TW, CLDCC, BC Parks, CTSS, VISTA, Trails BC, TVI, TCS, DBC
	Start-end:	Q4 18 – Ongoing
	Resources:	<div>  </div> <div> -- </div>

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Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: liaising with provincial government and private land owners, establishing a positive business climate, promoting flexible land use, and coordinating parks, recreation and transit planning
Cowichan Lake District Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: enterprise facilitation (retaining, expanding, attracting investment), community marketing, local event coordination, visitor servicing and business incentive programs
Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: developing stories and content to help interpret the trails and for building overall community support
Lake Cowichan First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: coordinating land use issues and tourism development initiatives, identifying appropriate Indigenous experiences, leveraged funding for priority projects
Tourism Cowichan Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: aligning the Plan with higher level plans, ensuring creative content is brand aligned, resource for marketing and branding, fee-for-service marketing campaign development and execution
Tourism Vancouver Island and Destination BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: aligning the Plan with higher level plans, accessing industry, marketing and destination development resources, encouraging operators to develop trail experiences
TimberWest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: increasing access to private lands for public recreation in a safe and appropriate way, creating shared opportunities for industry and Cowichan Lake Region Residents
Trail Organizations (e.g. Cowichan Trail Stewardship Society)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partner for: accessing resources and best practices that have already benefited other trail destinations

Figure 14. Potential Partnership Roles


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4. Build an alliance with Lake Cowichan First Nation	Priority:	Medium	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Plan to Council, focusing on the building of Indigenous trail experiences and other Plan initiatives where Indigenous partnerships are important. The presentation should also include how other First Nations in BC have become closely involved in trail initiatives. The Songhees and Esquimalt nations involvement in the E&N rail trail and the Splatshin Nation's purchase (along with local government) of the former CP Rail line between Sicamous and Armstrong, the Sinixt Nation's collaboration with the Slocan Valley Rail Trail Society and the partnership between the Squamish Nation and the District of North Vancouver on the North Shore Spirit Trail are all examples. • Invite band staff to join Society membership and potentially the Board. • Invite ITBC to give a presentation to the community on building relationships and how the Plan can be sensitive to Indigenous values and interests, including cultural interpretation and how it might become part of the trail experience. • Invite the negotiation and signing of an MOU that sets out guidelines for future collaboration and cooperation. The agreement could reference trail development, land use, business development and heritage and cultural interpretation. 	Partners:	LCFN, ITBC, TVI, TCS	
	Start-end:	Q1 19 – Q1 19	
	Resources:		--


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5. Create the operational capacity that will allow implementation of trail and infrastructure initiatives	Priority:	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a volunteer program. Without trail maintenance funding built into a formal management agreement, volunteers will be needed to develop and maintain whatever trail network is established. • Form a trail stewardship group of trained volunteers capable of effective development and maintenance in priority areas. It was noted at the engagement sessions that trail building in many BC communities is not necessarily undertaken by those who plan to use the trails, but by citizens who have the skills and interest in clearing, setting and maintaining them. A stewardship group could recruit these interested individuals and foster support to get involved. It's all about building a trail culture. • Work with Trails BC and other trail organizations to develop a training program based on a classroom/field work model. This will be necessary for skilled activities like mechanized clearing, brushing and pruning, surveying and surface maintenance. • Acquire the necessary insurance to protect landowners and facilitate agreements and partnerships. 	Partners:	CTSS, clubs, interested individuals
	Start-end:	Q1 19 – Q3 19
	Resources:	<div data-bbox="1717 630 1770 678"></div> <div data-bbox="1854 638 1896 662">--</div>

Hiking & Cycling Tourism Action Plan

Cowichan Lake Region

6. Develop a funding strategy	Priority:	Medium	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a three-year capital and operating plan. This would require preliminary identification of an epic downhill trail development as well as infrastructure investments such as trail heads, parking and amenities. RSTBC, Trails BC and other trail destinations such as Powell River and Cumberland can be contacted to obtain unit cost level estimates. • Meet with the CVRD, TLC and LCFN to share planning information and develop partnerships to maximize the contribution potential for funding applications. Applications from partnerships that provide diverse benefits are typically more successful than specialized asks from single organizations. • Prepare funding applications to the Rural Dividend program (fifth intake) and BikeBC for trail building and development. Ensure that projects are set in the context of the <i>Trails Strategy for British Columbia</i> to reinforce alignment with provincial goals. • Alongside tourism and economic development partners, monitor other funding application opportunities. The Trans Canada Trail Society, National Trails Coalition and federal infrastructure programs such as the New Building Canada Fund are all potential funding sources. • Consider hiring a temporary grant writer to help with funding applications. • Create a self-directed Friends of Lake Cowichan Trails program for raising local funds, improving trails and helping with trail building and maintenance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An Adopt-a-trail program as a way of raising funds targeted at specific trails. ○ A public fund-raising campaign, perhaps through a crowd-funding campaign similar to the Nanaimo Regional Rail Trail partnership setup in 2014 to support the E&N rail trail. A similar and highly successful campaign by the Okanagan Rail Trail Initiative is worth emulating. ○ Hosting or co-hosting charity events. ○ Corporate trail builder partner program. 	Partners:	Rural Dividend Fund, BikeBC, ICET, CFC, TLC, RSTBC, Trails BC, TCTS, National Trails Coalition	
	Start-end:	Q4 18 – Q1 19	
	Resources:		\$

4.3 Infrastructure

Trail experiences are built around the trail itself in combination with the surrounding environment, human interactions, visitor services and quality infrastructure. Creating market-ready trails requires trail surfaces, staging areas and trail heads, signage and basic amenities that make the use experience safe and enjoyable, and in line with what destination hikers, bikers and other trail users expect. Infrastructure deficiencies can deter trail use and create added risk for visitors and locals use the trails but are not adequately informed or prepared for the conditions they will encounter.

The prevalence of private land in the region means the context for infrastructure placement is much different than in other areas of the province where Crown land predominates. Provincial and local government agencies will not be responsible for the trails that are developed and used on private land, thus due consideration must be given to both capital and ongoing operating/maintenance needs. Interconnections of trails that cross ownership boundaries will mean that any improvements in the trail system will have to be carefully considered. If trails are going to be used as viable transportation corridors or to leverage the health benefits of physical activity among residents and visitors, then it is important that integration with roads, highways and protected areas strive for safe access for bicyclists, hikers, equestrians, off road vehicle (ORV) users and motorists alike.

Public or shared-use infrastructure also underlies the goal of attracting more destination visitors to the Cowichan Lake region, since it can serve to leverage greater private sector investment in trail experiences.

WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE?

The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

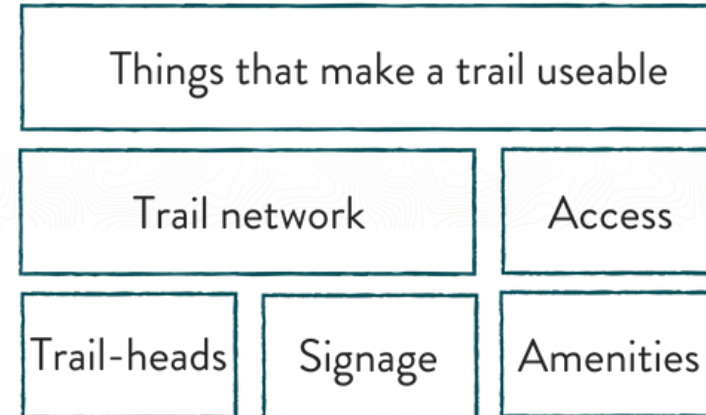
-Oxford English Dictionary



IMPACTS OF TRAIL TOURISM

Average Spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overnight Trip \$100 Day Trip \$37
Revenue per 1,000 Trail Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vancouver Island \$235,000 Cowichan Lake \$176,000
Economic Impact per 1,000 Trail Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs (direct + indirect) 1.6 Income (direct + indirect) \$66,000

WHAT IS TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE?




COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Better Quality of Life	Revitalized Shopping Core	Increased Tourism
Local Recreation	New Businesses	Improved Transit Options
Higher Property Values	Improved Health & Wellness	Diversified Tax Base

Figure 15. Infrastructure investment and trails infrastructure.


Hiking & Cycling Tourism Action Plan

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7. Create a digital inventory of existing and potential trails	Priority:	Medium	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemble trail guidelines and best practices manuals, which are widely available on the Internet from trail organizations in North America. The Whistler Trail Standards handbook is the model adopted by many Vancouver Island Cycling Clubs, including the Nanaimo Mountain Bike Club. Investigate and leverage most appropriate existing trail apps such as Trailforks, MapMyHike, ViewRanger and others. Form a Trail Task Force that would, over the course of the next six months undertake trail mapping. Interested citizens could be recruited through social media and TimberWest notified where there is going to be access on their land. Create a short, trail mapping toolkit with an approved typology and instructions on documenting trail conditions, natural and cultural features of interest, and infrastructure to guide task force members. Host a training workshop on trail mapping prior to any field work. Using the baseline provided in this Plan, map priority trails as identified in the engagement sessions: those being Beaver Lake, Robertson River, Bald Mountain, Cowichan River Foot Path, Trans Canada Trail, Christopher Rock, Mesachie Mountain, Copper Creek and Cottonwood. Develop an on-line trail wiki to encourage ongoing community involvement and feedback. This could be done through the wikimapping.com site, ideally in cooperation with local government. 	Partners:	CVRD, TLC, LCFN	
	Funding Sources:	Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD, BC Rural Dividend Fund, ICET, WED, local businesses	
	Start-end:	Q3 18 – Q4 18	
	Resources:		\$\$


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8. Develop at least two market-ready trails to attract visitors and encourage new Product	Priority:	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the inventory is completed and priority trails are digitally mapped, select at least one hiking and one cycling trail for development as market ready. A market-ready trail has parking, trail head signage, intersection signs and good trail markings, clearly defined and maintained, basic amenities such as washrooms and printed or online maps usable on a smartphone. The emphasis should be on potentially iconic or exceptional trails, as well as linkages with existing trails in parks and protected areas. Meet with Timber West and scope out the opportunity for development of the Christopher Rock trail. Youbou residents, riders and hikers should be represented. There may be an opportunity for full public access and use of the trail. Develop and fund a construction work plan and budget. Investigate the opportunity for a pump track, dirt jump or freeride park in partnership with a local government or private land owner with the necessary land requirements. As noted in the Current Situation Report, Dirt Jumping is a youth-oriented and popular discipline that typically occurs in confined areas and bike parks. A park could be patterned after the Stevie Smith Bike Park in Nanaimo. This would have the added advantage of bringing more local youth into trail activities and culture. Investigate the opportunity for making the Lake Cowichan region an “accessible” destination, focusing on front-country trails and routes. Additional sources of funding would be available if developments conform to the Province’s Accessibility 2024 strategy. 	Partners:	CTSS, TVI, TCS, CVRD, TLC, TW, MOTI, RSTBC, BC Parks, Trails BC, Cyclo Tourism BC, BC Cycling Coalition, IMBA Canada, MBTA, Horse Council BC
	Funding Sources:	Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD, BC Rural Dividend Fund, ICET, WED, MH, Bike BC, Vancouver Foundation, Trans Canada Trail Society, local businesses
	Start-end:	Q1 19 – Q4 19
	Resources:	<div>  <div>\$\$\$</div> </div>
9. Develop an epic mountain bike course	Priority:	High


Hiking & Cycling Tourism Action Plan

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather resources from mountain biking organizations to help with laying out a plan for the course, trail or park. IMBA Canada has numerous resources for guiding this initiative, which should be led by the Trails Task Force. ● Involve TimberWest if the preferred location is on their land and seek an agreement on development. ● Invite leading trail builders to the community for a presentation on trail building best practices. ● Identify and hire a rider consultant to assist with plan preparation and construction. ● Clearly identify the target market for the course, whether downhill, cross country or free riding. ● Determine trail placement, balancing vertical drop, interesting terrain, flowing and open sections, grade reversals and other terrain considerations that will have strong appeal for riders, with logistical requirements of access, parking and trail services. A short-list of trails should be identified and evaluated for rider appeal, durability, cost of development and maintenance and impacts on residents. ● Develop and fund a construction work plan and budget. 	Partners:	IMBA Canada, MBTA, TW, CVRD, LCFN, TCL, CTSS, TVI	
	Funding Sources:	Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD, BC Rural Dividend Fund, ICET, WED, Bike BC, local businesses	
	Start-end:	Q2 19 – Q1 20	
	Resources:		\$\$\$

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10. Create a signage program	Priority:	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage is critical to encouraging more trail use, keeping users safe and ensuring a positive visitor experience. Clear and consistent way finding relies on accurate location, directional, distance and safety information. Coordinated trail-head signage and interpretive displays will give users a sense of a true, integrated network. Signage also is an opportunity to promote the Lake Cowichan Region brand and drive users to the website and web apps. This strategy must be preceded by the brand strategy. • Compile a sign inventory and audit to determine a local baseline, what works, what does not and where improvements can be made. • Use RSTBC signage standards as a baseline while working with local government, trail groups and BC Parks to ensure local trails can be effectively and efficiently signed. • Prepare a graphics standards manual that describes how the brand is to be used for signage. • Develop a simple signage hierarchy (e.g. entry points, trail markets, information kiosk, interpretation). • Develop a phasing program that is fully coordinated with local government signage. 	Partners:	IMBA Canada, MBTA, TW, CVRD, TLC, LCFN
	Funding Sources:	Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD, ICET, WED, MAH, Bike BC, local businesses
	Start-end:	Q3 19 – Q3 20
	Resources:	

4.4 Experiences

In Section 2.4, the trail development pathway included experiences and tour packaging to complement services and infrastructure that are necessary to create visitor demand. On true destination trails like the Kettle Valley Railway in the Okanagan Boundary region, guiding guests represents the pinnacle of tourism activity because it tends incorporate multiple overnight stays at a high yield. Even if guests are self-guided there will be demand for services provided by accommodators, food and beverage establishments, rental services, and more. Building those experiences can be challenging because they require capital, competent marketing and operational capabilities that not all operators are able to provide. A narrow operating season and limited opportunities for positive cash flow play a role as well.

In order to move the needle on tourism development, market-ready services and experiences will have to complement and leverage the public investment in a market-ready trail. The private sector needs encouragement to compete, innovate and create experiences that visitors perceive as more than just the use of the trail as a physical corridor. Once the resident and visitor demand emerges and the awareness of the Cowichan Lake region as a trail destination grows, then the economic benefits, in terms of overnight stays, hospitality spending, employment and further industry investment, will follow. A virtuous circle of business and investment then set in and growth in other areas of tourism and economic development become possible. This growth path is not a theoretical concept, but has occurred in countless communities, some on Vancouver Island.


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11. Undertake a story project that curates and brings to life through copy and audio-visual content the unique stories and characters of the Lake Cowichan area	Priority:	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a story project work plan that brings to life the Lake Cowichan region's cultural, historical and industrial resources into trail-related narratives. This would have very strong appeal for US and overseas markets especially and could potentially be a USP as a trail destination. Animating local stories, characters and sites would enrich the trail experience and add some punch to marketing. Ideas brought up at the engagement sessions included First Nations, logging/forestry, rainforest ecology and its links to wildlife and water, copper mining, forestry "today" and gateway to the Carmanah/Walbran and Nit Nat Lake. • Work with the Kaatza Historical Society and other partners to put together a work group and work plan for this initiative. In addition to curated content, available audio-visual materials should be identified. • Work with TVI and DBC to adapt all copy and visual materials to EQ standards if possible for use in marketing and promotion. 	Partners:	Kaatza Historical Society, Cowichan Valley Museum and Archives, Vancouver Island Regional Library, DBC, TVI, Timber West, CVRD, TLC, SD 79, LCFN
	Start-end:	G2 19 – Q4 19
	Resources:	<div data-bbox="1732 1120 1774 1161"></div> <div data-bbox="1858 1120 1890 1161">\$</div>
12. Develop at least one destination trail event	Priority:	Flex


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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a signature annual event that could be cohosted with local partners. For cycling, Cycling Canada has an annual calendar for road, cyclo-cross, mountain bike, track, BMX and para events. Most of these are sanctioned by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI). A hiking event is also possible and this could follow best practices of European countries like Austria. It could be on a course that links together scenic areas, heritage sites, culinary stops or any site of visitor interest. Industry and indigenous experiences are also possibilities. Alternatively, the initial focus may be on a simpler local event, cohosted with local trail groups. An event could be targeted at women, youth, para/accessible or First Nations. Identify a signature annual festival that would appeal to the casual and leisure cyclist rather than racers. This could be based on Calgary's successful Cyclepalooza, Toronto's Bicycle Music Festival or Snoqualmie Washington's Gigantic Bicycle Festival (also a music festival). Regularly scan and seek out opportunities to host AGMs and symposia of trail organizations. 	Partners:	TCS, TVI, TLC, CVRD, LCDCC	
	Funding Sources:	Local businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD, Destination BC Events Fund, Canadian Heritage	
	Start-end:	Q4 19 – Q2 20	
	Resources:		\$\$

Hiking & Cycling Tourism Action Plan

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13. Provide business expansion and retention services	Priority:	Flex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote trail related business opportunities to local operators, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rentals, storage, bike share, shuttles and other trail-related services. Foods services and accommodation to encourage more overnight stays. Itineraries and tours that operators could be involved in and marketed through the Chamber, Visitor Centre and Cowichan Valley Tourism. Provide training opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A webinar(s) on creating trail services, products and experiences. A webinar(s) or seminar on how to be bike-friendly (washing facilities, bike hose, GPS/smartphone charging). A trail-related remarkable experiences workshop. This could be targeted at the Cowichan Valley or even the South Island to ensure there is enough uptake. Conduct a tourism business visitation program, based on the Business Walks program. Promote market and export ready criteria so potential operators have the expertise and resources to attract new visitors. Design a Cowichan Lake trails kit with accessories such as Cowichan Lake hiking/cycling jersey, sports pack, water bottle and trail map that could be merchandised by participating retailers and operators. Create an operator certification program that can be used to promote the brand. Quebec's Route Verte uses the <i>Bienvenue cyclistes!</i> certification for accommodation establishments and campgrounds that meet a consistent set of standards for visitor information, storage, repair, transportation and food service. Certification promotes the use of branded signage and participation in packaging and itineraries. 	Partners:	CLDCC, TVI, TCS, DBC
	Start-end:	Q4 19 – Ongoing
	Resources:	


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14. Coordinate tourism business and investment attraction efforts with partner agencies	Priority:	Flex	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an evaluation of community investment readiness using the Province's Investment Readiness Assessment Checklist, and be prepared to follow up with improvements to local preparedness. Areas that could be addressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporating a trails vision, policies and management directions in local government planning; Adopting flexible zoning bylaws that encourage new investment; Striving to improve the local business climate through a quick and low-cost permit process; Providing business, retention and expansion and other economic development services; Having updated, accurate information and community profile information; and Hosting a best practices website that promotes the community and region. Work with local government to develop a region-wide plan to lobby for and improve wifi and cell coverage in the region. Ongoing provincial and federal cell and broadband initiatives that set universal service targets and appropriated funding should be monitored. Innovative solutions such as select wifi hotspots on high use trails, rather than cell coverage, should be explored for remote areas. 	Partners:	LCFN, CVRD, TLC, LCDCC, TCS, TCA, JTT	
	Start-end:	Q3 20 – Ongoing	
	Resources:		\$

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Cowichan Lake Region

15. Create a gaming application	Priority:	Medium	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a storyline and game concept that is linked to the natural, cultural and/or industrial heritage of the region. Gamification is a proven method for digitally engaging visitors through the use of their smartphones, tablets or other digital devices. It can change people's motivation and behaviour in a playful and fun way and feature pre-, during- or post-trip themes that are destination-based or service-based. It can incorporate scores, puzzles, leaderboards or rewards to keep visitors engaged. • Assemble content and preliminary sketch work to minimize the costs of app development. • Seek out potential partners to share the costs of app development and distribution. • Gaming to contribute to charity partners such as stewardship or environmental groups. 	Partners:	TCS, TVI, CLDCC, DBC	
	Funding Sources:	ICET, WED, local businesses, game developers, Innova te BC, Telus	
	Start-end:	Q1 2020 – Q3 2020	
	Resources:		\$\$\$



4.5 Marketing

In order to generate a return on future trail investments through increased trail use and visitation, it will be necessary to strategically market the trails, ensuring alignment with other tourism and community marketing activities. Limited marketing resources necessitate partnerships with DMOs, local government, First Nations and tourism operators. In the early phases, marketing will have to focus on creating visitor awareness, promoting the brand and the core trail experiences through low-cost digital channels. It may take several years before travel planning today is predominantly through the internet and digital media so conventional print forms of advertising and supporting collateral will be minimized and kept to material that has a proven financial return.

Marketing can ramp up much more quickly than can the infrastructure and experience development initiatives in the previous chapters, a concerted effort must be made to ensure that the services travellers can expect are not over-promised and underdelivered. As the trail network expands and exceptional experiences are added, then more opportunities for investing in marketing activities will drive new visitor levels. Travel trade and travel media strategies can specialize, and the targeting of market intermediaries such as tour wholesalers can expand. Before this can happen, however, the trails and tourism operators must achieve market and export-ready status. Fully guided tours and experiences can be created to appeal to a broad spectrum of visitors.


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16. Create a brand identity for the Cowichan Lake Region that can be used for marketing, communications and signage activities	Priority:	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a task force to lead the brand initiative. Assemble and audit existing brands. Develop the brand, brand rationale, core values, application standards and graphic standards. Align with Destination BC Brand. Leverage the Cowichan Lake Region's current unique selling proposition (USP) and reevaluate the USP as infrastructure investments are made and the experience is enhanced. Develop a local signage program based on the Whistler Trail Standards handbook. 	Partners:	TVI, DBC, CVRD, CLDCC, LCFN
	Funding Sources:	Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD, TVI, DBC, local businesses
	Start-end:	Q3 19 – Q2 20
	Resources:	 


Hiking & Cycling Tourism Action Plan

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17. Register the Cowichan Trailblazers Society as a stakeholder of Tourism Cowichan and Tourism Vancouver Island	Priority:	Flex	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage collaborative marketing opportunities. • Work with Tourism Cowichan to create a presence for Cowichan Lake Region trail experiences. • Leverage relationship with Tourism Vancouver Island to amplify the presence of the trails. • Secure funding to secure a “premium” online marketing packages. 	Partners:	TVI, CVRD, LCDCC	
	Start-end:	Q1 19 - Ongoing	
	Resources:		\$


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18. Develop a marketing program.	Priority:	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the unique selling proposition and the target audience of the trails, build a marketing plan based on funding and priority. Example tactics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host Media FAM Tours. Media Press Trips coordinated by Tourism Vancouver Island with Destination BC; having a key contact at the community level working with operators and these organizations is an efficient way to utilize Destination BC programs. Offer activity options so guests have the opportunity to engage in learning or outdoor adventures while cycling or hiking. Examples of these include swimming, sun-bathing, picnicking and nature observation, along with recommendations for key stopovers. Collaborate with local partners to prepare route maps with stops of interest, local and railway history, and information about visitor and emergency services. Host an opening day festival for new trails. Work with community and regional DMOs to prepare an inventory of tourism assets and resources that could be incorporated into guided and unguided tours. Prepare themed itineraries that will appeal to target demographics. 	Partners:	Tourism operators, accommodators, TVI, CVRD, LCDCC.
	Funding Sources:	Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD, TVI, DBC, local businesses
	Start-end:	Q2 19 – Ongoing
	Resources:	


Hiking & Cycling Tourism Action Plan

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19. Trail map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce hardcopy trail maps for local use, to be sold or made available by local business. • Use content and artwork generated for digital materials. • Produce a 24"x36" map printed on 'stone paper', folding to rack size 4"x9". • Promote use of the map for framing and window display by local business. 	Priority:	High	
	Partners:	Tourism Cowichan, CVED	
	Start-end:	Q4 19 – Q1 20	
	Resources:		\$


Hiking & Cycling Tourism Action Plan

Cowichan Lake Region

20. Leverage existing websites, portals and apps	Priority:	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Tourism Cowichan Society to ensure CLR trails are included in their online (and printable) hiking and cycling map. • Establish a strong local presence on major trail apps such as Trailforks, MapMyHike, ViewRanger and AllTrails. • Incentivize local trail users to digitally map trails on major apps. • Monitor potential development of CVRD hiking and cycling brochure and ensure market ready trails in the CLR are included. 	Partners:	Local business community, Chamber of Commerce
	Start-end:	Q4 19 – Q3 20
	Resources:	

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21. Increase local capacity relating to social media.	Priority:	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Tourism Vancouver Island to host a complementary social media workshop to increase the effective use of paid and unpaid social media locally. • Evaluate effectiveness of paid and organic social media efforts. • A social listening study was conducted in the spring of 2018. This study informed marketing recommendations in this strategy and will serve as a baseline from which to compare future studies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with tourism Vancouver Island to conduct a complementary social listening study to measure the effectiveness of social media efforts to increase awareness of the Cowichan Lake Region as a trails destination. 	Partners:	Local business community, Chamber of Commerce,
	Start-end:	Q4 19 – Q3 20
	Resources:	<div>  </div> <div>\$</div>

5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING & MEASUREMENT

A simple logic model for measuring organizational performance is shown in the following graphic. The non-profit society will provide resources for undertaking core activities such as trail development, maintenance and marketing. Key outputs will be oriented around the trails and tourism development and building a strong and sustainable organization. All these are intended to generate outcomes, or effects, that benefit the community through a destination trail network, catering to both residents and visitors, and ultimately a robust and sustainable tourism economy.

It will also be important to communicate trail activities to the community, keeping them informed and ensuring a transparent, affecting decision- making process.

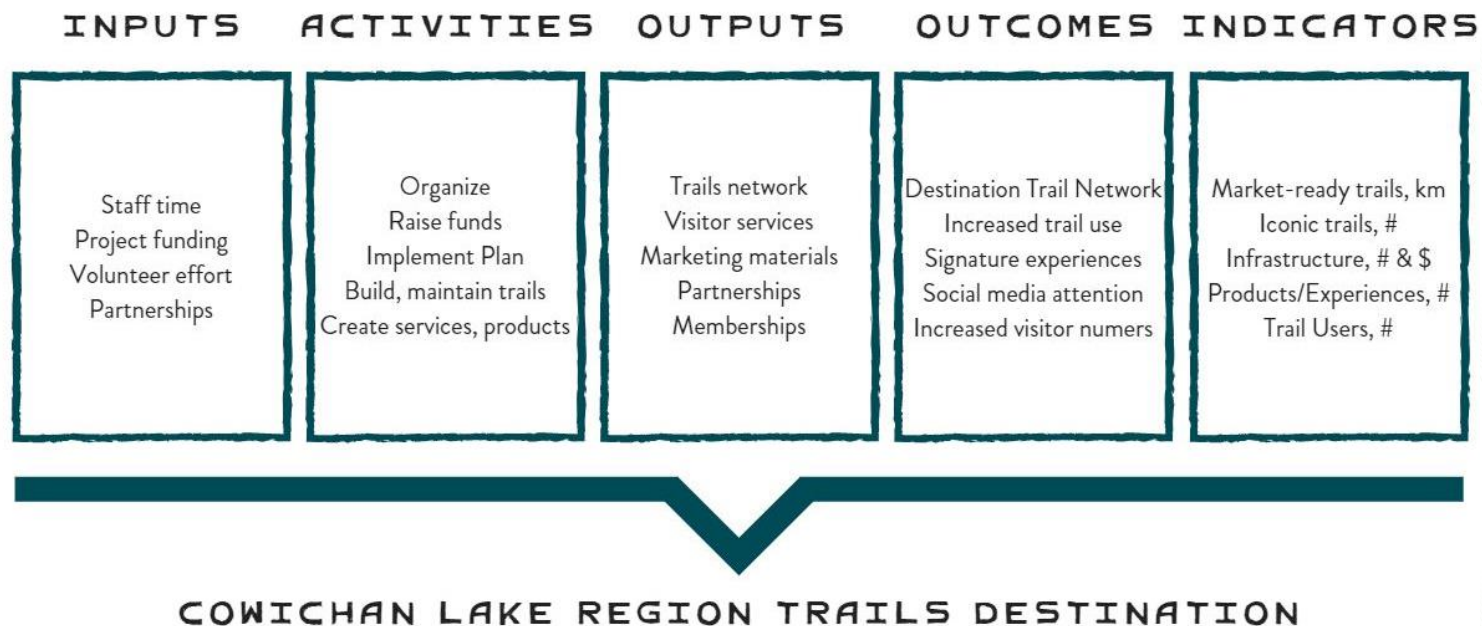



Figure 16. Destination trail development process.

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1. Prepare Annual workplan and reporting framework	Priority:	High	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an annual work plan to be implemented and monitored by the society.• Establish a quarterly reporting period, with an annual report summary.• Present annual report summary to local and regional government.	Partners:	Local government	
	Start-end:	Ongoing	
	Resources:		--

6. CASE STUDIES ON TRAILS DEVELOPMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Three case-studies have been prepared to show examples of successful trails development based on a range of organizational approaches, underlying purposes, and collaborative approaches. The studies are on the Shuswap Trails, the Sunshine Coast Trails, and the Cumberland Trails. Attention has particularly focused on the first of these case studies as the work associated with developing the Shuswap Trails is becoming increasingly recognized as a best practice. Together the case studies highlight the importance of:

- Developing clear strategic direction and communicating a vision that highlights the benefits to be gained from trails development;
- Working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to facilitate progress;
- Entering into management agreements that clearly stipulate roles and responsibilities – these in turn improve the basis for acquiring grants and funds;
- Recognizing the need to manage capacity and environmental impact;
- Providing infrastructure and supporting services to enhance the experience; and
- Promoting and developing events and related activities on the trails that raise awareness and create a stronger level of support for trails development from local/regional residents.

6.1 Shuswap Trails

6.1.1 Overview

Regional stakeholders first met in 2004 to explore the concept of an internationally recognized natural trail and waterway network that would be characterised by a commitment to environmental stewardship, sustainable economics and the development of a recreational asset that would contribute to healthy living. The impetus for discussion was an ambitious proposal for a single extended branded trail route that would link the Okanagan Shuswap valley. From the outset, the importance of broad-based dialogue and collaboration across a spectrum of interests was recognized and a steering advisory group was established with representation from the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Little Shuswap Indian Band, the Switzmalph Cultural Society, the City of Salmon Arm, the District of Sicamous, Community Futures Development Corporation, Salmon Arm Economic Development Society, Sicamous and District Chamber of Commerce, Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce, Shuswap Tourism and Economic Development, the Larch Hills Nordic Society, Shuswap Outdoors, Shuswap Naturalists, Salmon Arm Greenways, BC Backcountry Horsemen, the Shuswap Mountain Bike community, business, and accommodation operators. This commitment to inclusive dialogue has remained and has been a hallmark of the Shuswap Trails and a key factor in the ultimate success of the initiative over the years.

In November 2005 the Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance was formally incorporated as a legal non-profit society following a year-long study to examine the viability of the vision, and consider how communities, organizations and governing bodies might work collaboratively toward a linked system of natural trail, hut-to-hut, and waterway routes for walking, hiking, mountain biking, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, and paddling throughout the Shuswap. By the following year it had prepared an ambitious 5-year development strategy that would link existing trail plans throughout the Shuswap watershed into a unified system, and the Alliance formed the mechanism for cross-sectoral and inter-agency communication and decision making. Over time, this grew in significance as a model for leadership in trails development and the leveraging of financial and in-kind investment toward an agreed upon regional vision. This commitment to developing clear strategic direction through collaboration, engaging all stakeholder and members of the community, and an ongoing celebration of success have characterized the work to date.

6.1.2 Organization

The Shuswap Hut and Trails Alliance Society is a membership-based not-for-profit organization with a board of directors and three members of staff – an executive director, an executive coordinator, and a technical trail specialist. It has developed a comprehensive regional trails strategy with the purpose of protecting, enhancing and recognizing trails as an integral part of the Shuswap lifestyle, culture and economy. The strategy makes a commitment to ensuring that trails are appropriately authorized, mapped, developed, maintained, and promoted, while also protecting and promoting First Nations interests, reducing and repairing ecological damage from all trail use, and managing land access appropriately.

The Shuswap Trails Roundtable has been established to implement the Shuswap Regional Trails Strategy through direction to a Working Group. The Roundtable has representation from a very broad range of stakeholders, and meets once a year to set direction, share information, and resolve disputes arising from Agreements with Other Sectors, or Access Management Plans. It is designed to be open and inclusive and is comprised of anyone with an interest in or responsibility to manage or promote trails, recreation, tourism and economic development in the Shuswap, including local First Nations and provincial governments, motorized and non-motorized trail user groups, industry sectors that overlap with trail use on Crown land, and any other interest groups. Decision making is based on consensus, with the Roundtable providing an opportunity to present and discuss dissenting views. While it provides an annual forum for collaboration, communication, and forms an agreement to work together, it is recognized that it is non-regulatory and has no authority for decision making regarding land use, permit or authorizations.

The operational implementation of the Trails Strategy is led by the Working Group, which plays a key role in reviewing, clarifying and providing input to trails authorization requests from local, First Nations and provincial governments. The Group meets quarterly and is made up of representatives from the First Nations Government – Sexqéltkemoc Lakes Division, local governments (CSRDC, City of Salmon Arm, Village of Chase, District of Sicamous, City of Enderby, RDNO, and TNRD), Provincial government (RSTBC (FLNR), TRAN, BC Parks), motorized groups, non-motorized groups including the Shuswap Trails Alliance, other stakeholders such as (School District 83, Switzmalph Cultural Society, Interior Health Authority, Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society, and TOTA). Sub-committees and standing committees can be established as necessary to look at very specific issues.

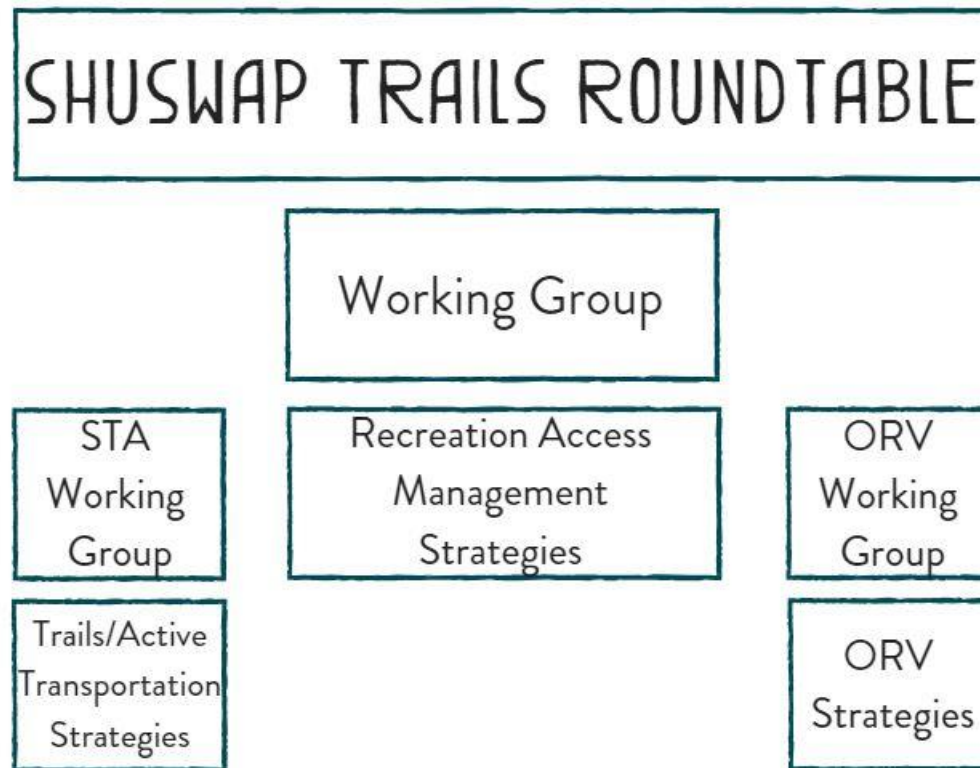


Figure 17. Shuswap Trails Roundtable Structure

The diagram illustrates the inter-relationships within the governance model. With the breadth of collaboration, the forum provides an opportunity to strategically align efforts within a wider regional and provincial context[1].

6.1.3 Infrastructure & Support

Over the years since inception, the Shuswap Trails Alliance has made remarkable progress in the development and management of a regional trails system that was based on an early identification of over 300 kilometres of proposed trail and greenway corridor throughout the Shuswap watershed. In 2017 the STA reported that it had taken on over 270 projects valued at more than \$2.11 million in amenity assets over a 12-year period, and written or contributed to 80 community trail plans, stewardship plans, publications, guidelines, research reports and public documents, while engaging over 200 groups. Its remarkable list of achievements has included the development of 11 signature trail systems, 100 regional trails, 9 major upgrades, the installation of over 1,100 signs and 5,500 route blazes, and over 110 km of new trails impacting 12 communities throughout the Shuswap.

The progress and success of the STA can be attributed to a range of factors. To a large extent, its development activities have been shaped by a series of underlying guiding principles that have in turn contributed to its success. These include a commitment to:

- Working with a very diverse range of stakeholders and partners that include the fore-mentioned as well as financial institutions, service clubs, economic development organizations, activity clubs, over 200 regional businesses, and Thompson Rivers University. Through the work of STA, other stakeholders are able to see progress in their mandates, such as the BC Healthy Communities initiative. In addition to working with these partners, the STA has an impressive support base consisting of hundreds of local residents and volunteers from around the region who are all working toward the common goal of making the Shuswap a healthier place to live. In 2017 alone over 50 partners worked together on over 65 projects throughout the region and over 5,400 volunteer hours were logged. Considerable capacity has been developed through the dedicated volunteer Shuswap Trail Alliance Trail Stewardship Program.
- Supporting and providing leadership for community initiatives – the STA’s role in acting as a liaison point with community leadership and organizations and working behind the scenes to build relationships with inter-regional partners was instrumental in the successful purchase of the CP Rail Corridor between Sicamous and Armstrong earlier this year for rail trail development. This purchase is a significant step forward in the development of an iconic trail that could ultimately stretch from Sicamous to Osoyoos in the South Okanagan.
- Providing clear communications and transparency in all its activities. A website that provides comprehensive review of all activities and progress, and a regular weekly email to all interested constituents ensures that everyone associated with the work is kept well informed and can be fully engaged in all voluntary activities. An emphasis on celebrating success and innovative grass-roots funding

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initiatives keeps the stakeholder base, local residents and active volunteers involved and builds a strong regional awareness of programs and projects.

- Advancing the concept of sustainability into a meaningful practice of environmental stewardship. This emphasis has been present from the outset and underlies the “environmental trail screening and adaptive monitoring” work. This screening program is based on a series of checklists and templates that are used to assess potential environmental impacts of proposed activities during early planning stages, ensuring that all federal and provincial legislation and standards are followed, and applies science-based understanding of species and habitats in a practical adaptive management approach.

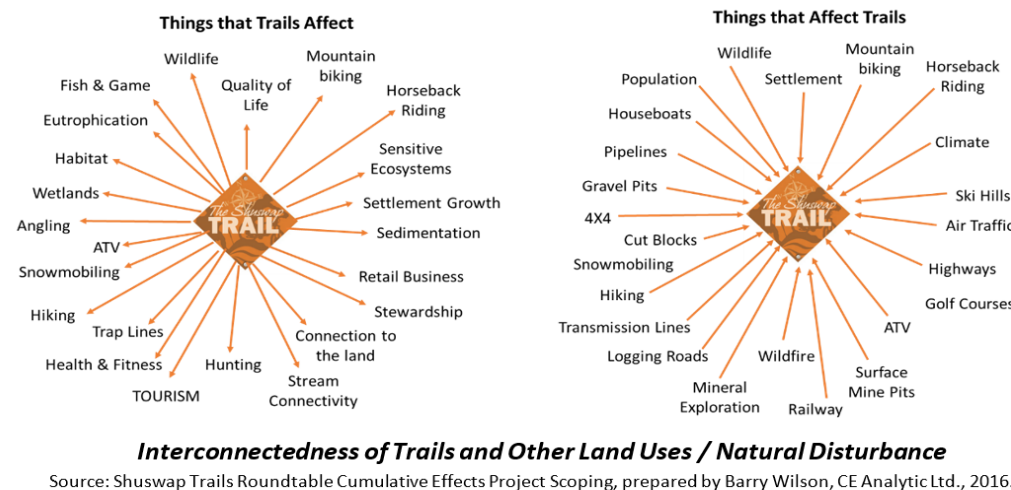


Figure 18. Interconnectedness of Trails and Land Uses

More recently this approach has been taken further forward in the Roundtable’s work on “cumulative effects assessment” and its interest in promoting a greater understanding of the need to look at the cumulative effects of all land uses and natural disturbance on important values within the watershed system—an approach to resource-base management that aligns with the knowledge and traditional laws of the Secwépemc people. The management of trails and the related dialogue regarding “things that trails affect” and “things that affect trails” are based on principles that can be transferred to wider discussions, and the Shuswap Trails Roundtable recognizes the potential of this type of

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discussion becoming de facto guidance for holistic watershed management in the Shuswap—indeed the Roundtable aspires to be seen as a leader in the application of cumulative effects assessments in innovative, collaborative and community-based land use planning in BC.

Creating innovative approaches to facilitating collaborative action, including developing a template for initiating and developing agreements with all industry sectors (forestry, mining, guide outfitters, trapping, commercial recreation, and tourism). This ensures communication, coordination and collaborative planning and support, in relation to areas, with recreational and tourism business potential, and allows for full consideration of evolving First Nations title and rights. This template agreement[2] can be used in a joint planning process over access management plans or other priority planning areas, and outline joint management that will ensure acknowledgement and accommodation of rights, values and interests within the area, while identifying communication needs and expectations. The template also provides a context to discuss proposed future use of the area for industry sectors, including the future tourism potential, and a range of management considerations relating to insurance for trail user groups, environmental stewardship, trails management, enforcement policies and resourcing or funding issues.

Highlighting the need for consistency in quality and design through the development of a manual on trail design standards. The manual was put together following a review of a range of existing standards[3]. It recognizes the importance of planning trails around “anchors” or points of interest that will draw people to use the trail as part of an experience, and provides technical specification for five different types of trails: – paved double-track trail for smooth, all weather use; surfaced double-track or single-track trail; natural surface single-track trail; unsurfaced single-track trail; and, low-impact nature trail or lightly used wilderness trail. The manual also provides design information on trails infrastructure – switchbacks, water crossings, wet areas, fences, stiles, retaining walls, and technical trail features.

This collaborative approach that seeks to work within existing community value systems, has the additional benefit of being highly successful at attracting and leveraging funding. In 2017/18, for example, funds have been acquired from a range of sources that included the BC Rural Development Grant Program, the BC Rural Dividend Grant program, BC Parks Enhancement Fund grants, and the Horse Council of BC, with matching funds being derived from local governments, service clubs, the Salmon Arm MRDT (hotel tax), and funds secured through voluntary fund-raising events. In 2017 total leveraged funds amounted to \$565,354 – with 62% derived from partner funding and grants, 16% from donations and fundraising and 22% in-kind.

6.1.4 Experiences

The work of the STA has resulted in an infrastructure that now supports an extensive range of activities and experiences year-round. There is a comprehensive online database or inventory of trails and an interactive map to assist users in planning activities based on location, distance, degree of difficulty—with accompanying user maps. The greenway system is now being expanded to include a blueway trail system, and activities that can be pursued include walking, running, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and paddling. While the initial work was very much centered on non-motorized activities, there are increasing efforts now being made to look at ways of developing, managing and promoting opportunities for off-highway motorized travel – snowmobiling, motorbiking, and ATVing.

With the development of these trails, new experiences, activities and events have emerged. Not all have remained permanent offerings but they demonstrate creative ways of increasing visitation and using trails in a more integrated way. Examples include:

- The innovative merging of art and outdoors through a Trail Mix art Exhibition – a multi-media exhibition featuring the work of 15 teams of artists, photographers and guides exploring Shuswap trails held in 2016. The initiative was a diverse and layered exhibition that took place both on the trails and in galleries and was designed to bring an all-season visual story of celebration together.
- Events such as the Salty Dog Enduro held in early May.
- The Lewiston Ultra Marathon is a new event this year involving trail running on race circuits.
- The Routes and Blues Outdoor Interpretive Program was based on a series of trail experiences that were designed as ‘add-on’ activities to the Roots & Blue Festival that would provide reason for extending the stay.
- The development of new entrepreneurial opportunities and businesses such as the off-road Segway tours that were first launched in 2011 and remain a unique activity on the trails.
- The establishment of a Shuswap TrailRider program by the Shuswap TrailRider Adaptive Adventure Society designed to provide opportunities for physically disabled and less mobile individuals to experience the outdoors.

As all trails are within the Traditional Territory of the Southern Secwepemc First Nation, users are asked to respect the privilege of being able to use these trails. This is the home land of the Neskonalith Indian Band, Little Shuswap Indian Band, Adams Lake Indian Band and the Splatshin (Spallumcheen) Band. For generations these First Nations communities have preserved the abundance of wildlife and the natural beauty of this land in their pristine environment. The flora and fauna of these Shuswap First Nation lands are a photographer’s dream. With all that these lands have to offer, they ask that you visit, or come to stay. The First Nation communities in this region ask in return that you treat the

land and the people with respect. This is their home for the short time that they are here on Mother Earth, but it is the home of their great spirit for eternity. Please respect the First Nations Territorial Lands in the Shuswap region by obeying signs where there are sensitive cultural areas. These trails are for you to enjoy today and for the future generations of tomorrow [4].

6.1.5 Marketing

The marketing and promotion of trails is achieved through the work of STA itself, and through the marketing activities of key partners, particularly Shuswap Tourism. The Alliance hosts its own promotional user-facing website/regional online trails guide – <http://www.shuswaptrails.com/>, and its organization-focused website – <http://www.shuswaptrailalliance.com/>. In addition to all the web-based tools (maps, database etc.), STA works with Shuswap Tourism to print the Shuswap Trails guide (now in its sixth edition) and to develop other related guides, such as the XC Ski and Snowshoe Guide. Shuswap Tourism works closely with the Alliance to ensure that the nature of promotion and the types of activities being promoted are in alignment with the strategic direction of the Alliance.

Other organizations actively support the promotional activities of STA including the Chambers of Commerce and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association.

6.2 Sunshine Coast Trail

The 180km long Sunshine Coast Trail stretches from Sarah Point in Desolation Sound to Saltery Bay, and is now Canada's longest Hut-to-Hut Hiking Trail with its 14 completed huts – the only free trail of this nature in the country.

Work on developing local trails commenced in 1992 with the formation of the Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society (PAWS). The Sunshine Coast Trail crosses a wide variety of landscapes, from coastal shorelines, along creeks and lakes, through old growth forests to panoramic mountaintops[5].

Approximately 15 kilometres of the trail at the northern end, near Lund, falls within Malaspina Provincial Park. Further south, Inland Lake Provincial Park encompasses 10 kilometres of the trail. A large section of the trail between Lund and Powell River traverses private forest lands where harvesting also takes place along the trail. Outside of these parks and private lands, the trail lies within the tenure area of Tree Farm Licence (TFL) 39, held by WFP, and within the area of some other forest licensees, including the Sliammon First Nation, Powell River Community Forest and BC Timber Sales (BCTS). In November 2015, the Trail achieved the distinction of being included in Explore Magazine's 50 Best Hikes in the World.

6.2.1 Organization

The Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society (PRPAWS) was established as a registered non-profit charitable society to focus on establishing accessible parks and wilderness areas in the Powell River district, with linking corridors where possible, protecting old growth in a variety of settings, and promoting outdoor recreation and tourism in these areas. The society has a board of directors and works closely with a group of volunteers on trail maintenance, infrastructure development, promotional activity, and event organization.

The Society's work is guided by its comprehensive Feasibility Study and Business Plan initially developed in 2000 which was developed on the understanding that trails create jobs, enhance property values, expand local businesses, attract new or relocating businesses, increase tax revenues, decrease local government expenditures and promote community well-being. Recognition for the linkages between trail development and tourism, and the potential of outdoor recreation to diversify an economy with a high income-dependency on forestry was the basis of moving forward with the ongoing development of the Sunshine Coast Trail and supporting infrastructure.

In reviewing the original Business Plan, the following recommendations have been noted as being of value to the Cowichan trails project:

- Given that the Trail traverses eight jurisdictions[6], the need to address the tenure issue and secure agreements for access and management with the Sunshine Coast Trail Committee was regarded as important. To facilitate these discussions, the need for a dataset on the following was identified:
 - An accurate inventory and valuation of timber resource values that will be impacted by trail buffering.
 - A market assessment of the sensitivities of potential trail users to harvesting activities adjacent to the trail.
 - An assessment of the potential revenues to be generated from the Sunshine Coast Trail.
 - A discussion paper detailing a spectrum of options for management of the forest resources adjacent to the trail – varying from clear-cut to full buffering.
 - An assessment of the total harvesting that exist along the trail within the next 25 years.

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Within the context of securing agreements with the public sector, including BC Parks, it was recommended that tenure agreements were formalized and included agreements on signage and the development of management plans for applicable portions. As part of the final agreement that was concluded between the Tla'amin Nation, Canada and British Columbia in 2014, the Sunshine Coast Trail Agreement between the Tla'amin Nation and the Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society clarifies matters relating to access and management.

In 2009, the Sunshine Coast Trail was established as a recreational trail under section 56 of the Forest Range and Practices Act. This designation enabled Recreation Sites and Trails BC to enter into an agreement to manage the trail with PRPAWS and to spend operational funds, and to apply the Forest Recreation Regulation to the trail, thereby allowing for the establishment and enforcement of rules of usage[7].

This agreement with Recreation Sites and Trails BC allowed PRPAWS to secure funding for trail improvements. Since 2009, the Islands Coastal Economic Trust has provided approximately \$3.2 million in grant money to PRPAWS. Two additional groups with an interest in trails contributed matching funds through volunteer labour (costed at \$15/hour). Other support has come from the regional district, the City of Powell River, the Union of BC Municipalities, the BC Transmission Corporation, and most recently, Powell River Community Forest Ltd.

6.2.1 Infrastructure, Support and Experiences

The work of PRPAWS within the Upper Sunshine Coast has created a strong network of support and collaboration that has contributed significantly to the success of the Trail. An important factor in the organization's success was in developing a simple vision that the community could buy into and see the benefit[8]. From the onset of the project, residents understood the positive impact this initiative could have in protecting the environment, creating recreational assets and attracting new visitors. These positive impacts have already been realized and the Trail's biggest user group is residents of the Sunshine Coast.

The importance of supporting the Trail is further evident in the way in which it is now integrated into a wide range of policies. The following plans and strategic reports all have statements identifying support for the protection, maintenance and improvement of the Trail:

- Powell River Regional District Regional Trails Plan (2016)
- Electoral Area A Official Community Plan (2015)
- Electoral Area B Official Community Plan (2012)
- Electoral Area C Official Community Plan (2012)
- Regional District Parks & Greenspace Plan (2010)
- Tla'amin Land Use Plan (2010) – recommendation relates to trails in general
- Sliammon First Nation Comprehensive Community Plan (2007)

In particular, gaining the support of the First Nations in the development and management of the SCT was highlighted as an important factor in its overall success.

From the perspective of developing a tourism product, the decision to build hut-to-hut infrastructure has been key to differentiating the Trail nationally and internationally and has become a critical element in the overall trail experience and its success. Fourteen huts have now been completed and vary from a basic semi-open structure costing \$20,000 (today's estimated costs + labour) to \$70,000 (+ labour) for those that are fully insulated with pellet stoves. The insulated cabins allow for winter usage, which is increasing in volume. In addition to the huts, the following trails infrastructure has been developed: 2-4 tent sites adjacent to the various cabins; 7,000 + wooden signs and trail markers; directional signage at intersections with linking trails; and bridges and benches. Work is currently progressing on building two final huts, new composting toilets and bear-proof food-storage facilities.

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To further enhance the user experience, a new transportation shuttle service was introduced in 2016. This commenced as a volunteer shuttle vehicle for the Sunshine Coast Trail Marathon Shuffle in May, 2016 and by October 2016 it was established as a new business. The service allows hikers to reach more difficult to access points such as Sarah Point, and a percentage of earnings are donated to PRPAWS. the new transportation business also offers other services designed to add value including:

- Holding/carrying forward any hiking and food supplies – with the option of having these dropped at any preferred point. This includes providing fresh produce from local farms;
- Outfitting services; and
- Remote catering with the opportunity again to experience fresh produce from land and sea.

While these services have yet to gain significant traction, it is likely to be only be a matter of time as numbers of visitors hiking the trail continues to grow at a rate of approximately 25% per annum. Awareness of the trail has been heightened through social media and user reviews, and today approximately 3,000 people are on the trail through the course of a year – with many of these being solo and solo-women travellers. However, with this rate of growth, there are now times when cabins are full and unable to meet all of the demand, and it is likely that PRPAWS will have to implement a registration process to manage the demand-supply dynamics.

The growth in users has also created user conflict issues. Where possible, PRPAWS is seeking to maintain the trail as a single-use hiking trail given that this is part of its distinctiveness and overall appeal. However, where there are adjacent trails or potential multi-use options that do not overly compromise hiking as an activity, multi-use options are being explored or have been put into place.

6.2.2 Marketing

PRPAWS works closely with Tourism Powell River to market the SCT. A website has been designed to promote awareness of activities to both visitors and locals, including the voluntary work of PRPAWS – <https://sunshinecoast-trail.com/>. The branding of the trail and the consistency in the style of markers has further helped in establishing an identity.

One important activity in raising awareness has been the development and promotion of the Sunshine Coast Trail's Marathon Shuffle. 2018 marks its 25th year with the event growing from a few people to a point where it had to be capped at 400 last year. In light of its popularity and the growing issues between managing runners and hikers, the event was split in 2018 to allow for a total participation of 700. This included a half shuffle of approximately eight kilometres that tended to appeal to families, and a full 29-kilometre marathon shuffle the following day on a different section of trail.

Within the local area, a passport program, launched in 2013, played a significant role in building local understanding and participation. Sponsored by the First Credit Union, the SCT Passport was an innovative way of encouraging people to collect unique stamps at each hut to complete the passport. Although this program raised funds for PRPAWS and while passports are still sold, the numbers are now in decline largely as a result of being a local initiative that has run its course.

Perhaps the main tool now in promoting the SCT is the role of social media, bloggers and travel writers. Any search on the internet brings up a wide range of webpages with users' commentary an indication of its growing success and global profile as a coastal hiking experience in western Canada.

6.3 Cumberland's Mountain Biking Trail Network

6.2.2 Overview

The development of the Cumberland's Mountain Biking Trail Network has been proceeding since the 1990s throughout a working forest area that is privately owned by Hancock Forest Management and TimberWest Forest Corp and adjacent to the Village of Cumberland. In 2015 the United Riders of Cumberland (UROC), the Village of Cumberland, TimberWest Forest Corp., and Hancock Forest Management announced that a land access agreement had been reached to formally allow non-motorized recreation on these private managed forest lands adjacent to the Village of Cumberland.

Under the terms of the agreement, UROC have taken on responsibility for key trail management and maintenance across approximately 100 km of singletrack trails, while also continuing to work in partnership with local trail builders and other stakeholders.

6.2.3 Organization

The United Riders of Cumberland have played the lead role in developing the trails network. The organization is a membership-based registered non-profit society that is committed to building and maintaining mountain bike trails as part of its mission to develop and support participation in mountain biking within the Cumberland area. It works in partnership with other community groups, agencies, societies and organizations that share interests. The Society has a Board of Directors, and direction on trails maintenance is provided through a Trail Maintenance Committee – a group of community members that advise on maintenance priorities. The development and maintenance work is carried out by a paid trail manager and crew, and is further supported through organizing six public Trails Maintenance Days per year to engage the membership base in supporting the ongoing development of the trails network.

As noted, the trails that UROC have worked on over the years are on private land, and the signing of the agreement in 2015 represents a major milestone in the process of building relationships and credibility with major landowners in the area, and with promoting the vision of legally sanctioning the trail network. With the long-term commitment to building trust, the Village of Cumberland reassessed its involvement in 2011 and recognized that it could play a stronger facilitating role in supporting the UROC to the benefit of the whole community. A new municipal parks and outdoor recreation coordinator position was created, which in turn provided a greater level of support for discussions between UROC and the landowners.

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Over the three-year period that followed, the different stakeholders worked together to understand each other's concerns and develop a model that would work for everyone. The landowners' concerns included liability, communications and public safety. For the volunteer-run club, taking on responsibility (and liability) for the trails was a major undertaking, requiring UROC to build the capacity necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive trail management plan[10]. As discussions proceeded, the UROC formally committed to taking on responsibility for managing the trail network and a memorandum of understanding outlined the Village of Cumberland's role in assisting the organization with advancing the work of the trails network was put in place. The agreement between all parties was finally reached in 2015, and the Trails License Agreement commenced on January 1, 2016.

With this agreement in place UROC is now responsible for holding and maintaining a comprehensive general liability insurance policy, in addition to ongoing trails development work. The trails system can now be legally used for mountain biking, hiking and trail running.

Funding for the work of mountain biking trails development within the area is based on multiple sources, including:

- Membership fees;
- A sponsorship program with levels ranging from 'platinum' at \$2,500 (cash and/or in kind annually) through to 'silver' at \$600 or equivalent;
- Participation fees for mountain biking events and programs;
- Competitive grants, such as those disbursed through the National Trails Coalition and the Provincial Rural Dividend grant program;
- Fund raising initiatives – such as those organized by the Cumberland Community Forest; and
- Comox Valley Regional District.

6.3.1 Infrastructure and Support

In addition to the ongoing development of the mountain biking trails network, work is proceeding on the following:

- The development of a 4km non-motorized climbing trail will allow users to access the upper part of the trail network without having to travel on resource roads or climb up trails that are subject to the risk of fast moving downhill traffic. This is a 2018 initiative and reflects the growth in popularity of the network with an estimated 100,000 trail visits in 2017[11]. The initiative not only reduces the element of risk, but it also allows the UROC to plan and implement a trail experience that is regarded as consistent with best practices. Construction is expected to begin in 2019.
- The imminent construction of a pedestrian and cycling corridor from Cumberland to the entrance of Cumberland Forest – to be developed by the Village.
- Trail head and directional signage. New signage is being installed that will show both the trail name and the difficulty rating, while directional signage will point to key network features and junctions.
- The development of the Cumberland Jump Park and Skate Park to include four dirt jump trails (beginner through to expert in difficulty rating), a pump track and a run/bike trail. The 5,200 square foot custom concrete skatepark will have a street section, a bowl and a mini-ramp, and is designed with an emphasis on beginner to intermediate features to reflect Cumberland's growing demographic of young families, with additional advanced features to challenge more experienced skateboarders.
- The installation of sign badges that indicate required or recommended direction of travel – in 2017. Following feedback on these badges the UROC is gathering further community input before determining any new approach to minimizing trail user conflict and maintaining safety.
- To further minimize conflict of use, UROC have developed a policy on e-bikes. Clarification on this issue was seen as critical as the organization's sole purpose is to advocate for non-motorized trail use on the privately-owned lands. On the basis of this mission, UROC has stated that it considers e-bikes to be motorized and does not currently support their use on the trail network.

6.3.2 Experiences

With the formalization of the trails, stakeholders were quick to position the area as the unofficial epicentre of island riding with the tag line, Where the Mountain Biking is Legendary.

This positioning and the overall appeal of the trails to both locals and visitors has been heightened by hosting a variety of mountain-bike races and events including the BC Bike Race (allegedly the biggest single-track mountain-biking event in the world), the Mind Over Mountain Adventure Race, annual enduro, cross-country, downhill and marathon races, and two major trail running races: The Cumby and the Perseverance Trail Run. A comprehensive program of local events for young riders, women and club members contributes to the growing trail use.

6.3.3 Economic Impact of Cumberland Trails

In 2016 research was undertaken by Vancouver Island University to assess the economic benefits being derived from the trails, and the characteristics of the user and the trail activities[12]. Key findings include:

- An indication of use at an average of 292 trail users per day, based on monitoring three trail counters used between July and October 2016 – giving a total of over 35,000 for the four months.
- 75% of users are from the regional district, almost 15% from elsewhere on the island, just under 7% from elsewhere in BC, and over 4% from beyond the province – (based on an online and face-to-face survey). For those visiting from outside the region, half spent at least two nights in Cumberland, and most of their whole trip within the region indicating that it was their primary destination.
- The average day trip spend was \$81/person and \$93 for those staying overnight. Over 75% of this spending was in-region.
- 80% of those surveyed had used the trails for mountain biking, 55% for hiking and 41% for trail running.
- 63% used paper maps for the purpose of navigation, while 57% of users identified the Trailforks mobile app as a navigation tool.
- The top two factors of importance in choosing to visit Cumberland trails related to the abundance of trails and variety of terrain. The following figure highlights the range of factors identified in the survey.

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In addition to highlighting factors that contribute to the success of developing a regional trails network, the case studies also demonstrate the way in which trails ultimately add to the quality of life for local residents and can play an important role in attracting new residents and in providing the basis for entrepreneurial development, with new businesses offering supporting services found in all three jurisdictions. A sense of pride is associated with the trails, and each trails system can be clearly regarded as an important tourism asset and the basis for distinctive visitor experiences.

[1] Elements of this discussion on the Roundtable can also be found in Destination BC's Shuswap-North Okanagan Destination Development Strategy. The content for both was prepared by Tourism Planning Group.

[2] See Shuswap Regional Trails Strategy Appendix 4

[3] The Whistler Trail Design Standards; Trail Solutions (International Mountain Bike Association); Natural Surface Trails by Design (Troy Scott Parker); Managing Mountain Biking (IMBA); Lightly on the Land (Student Conservancy Association); Fromme Mountain Sustainable Trail Use and Classification Plan

[4] <http://www.shuswaptrails.com/about.php>

[5] <https://sunshinecoast-trail.com/>

[6] Provincial Crown Forest Land; Powell River Regional District Parks; Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks and Roads; BC Ministry of Highways; BC Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks and Protected Areas; Weyerhaeuser Fee Simple Lands; and Pacifica Paper Fee Simple Lands – in addition to overlaying Sliammon First Nation's identified Treaty Settlement Lands.

[7] Forest Practices Board, 2013, Harvesting near a Recreational Trail on the Sunshine Coast

[8] Personal interview with Eagle Walz, Chair of PRPAWS, June 2018

[9] Powell River Regional District Regional Trails Plan, December 2016

[10] <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/economic-development/bc-ideas-exchange/success-stories/bc-resource-success-stories/cumberland-trails>

[11] <https://unitedridersofcumberland.com/climbing-trail-will-be-added-to-the-cumberland-trail-network/>

[12] Vancouver Island University, November 2016, Cumberland Trails Survey 2016

7 ASSET MAPPING AND INVENTORY

The following maps identify the Cowichan Lake Region's key tourism assets. All maps below are screen grabs of an interactive digital map that contains additional data points specific to each asset. Data for this inventory was primarily retrieved from a TripAdvisor scrape. TripAdvisor was used as it is one of the world's largest travel-related websites and forums. Any business involved in the tourism industry should have a well maintained TripAdvisor presence.

7.1 Accommodation Assets

The Cowichan Lake Region has a very limited inventory of market ready fixed roof accommodation properties. The majority of current visitors to the Region stay in local campgrounds which are at capacity during peak summer months and very quiet during the shoulder and off seasons.

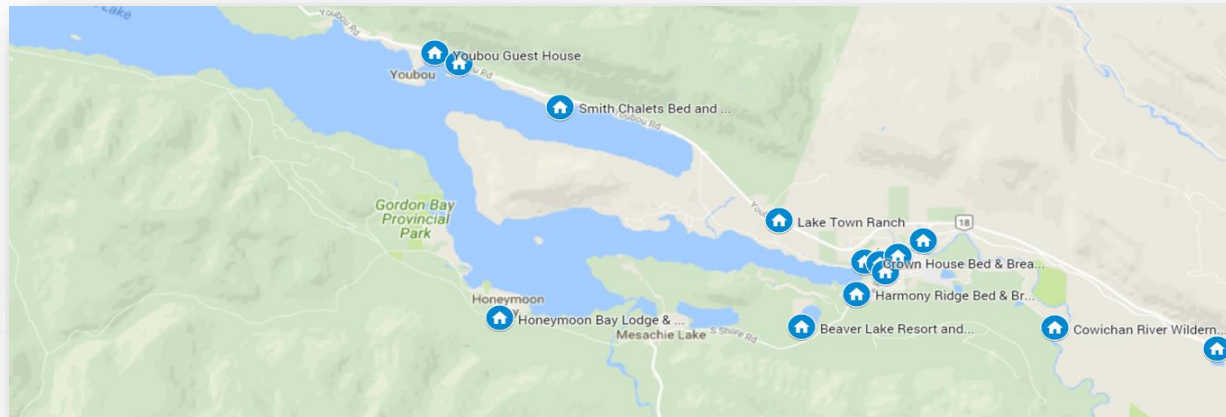


Figure 19. Accommodation Asset Map

7.2 Food and Beverage Assets

The Cowichan Lake Region has approximately 18 visitor-ready food and beverage establishments. The majority of these businesses are clustered in the Town of Lake Cowichan.

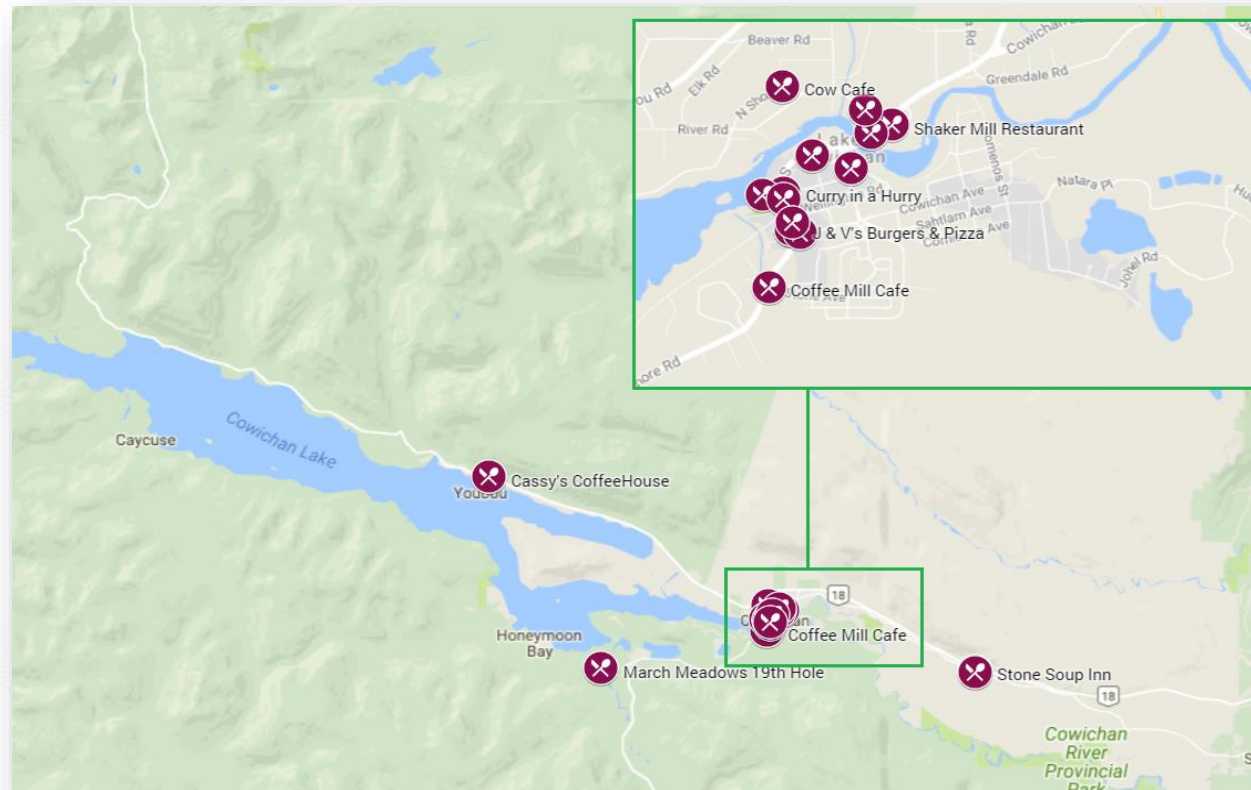


Figure 20. Food and Beverage Asset Map

7.3 Activity and Park Assets

The Cowichan Lake Region has an abundance of park areas and natural attractions, but very few businesses leverage the Region's natural assets. These parks and attractions are distributed around Cowichan Lake, with the three attraction-based businesses being located within the Town of Lake Cowichan.

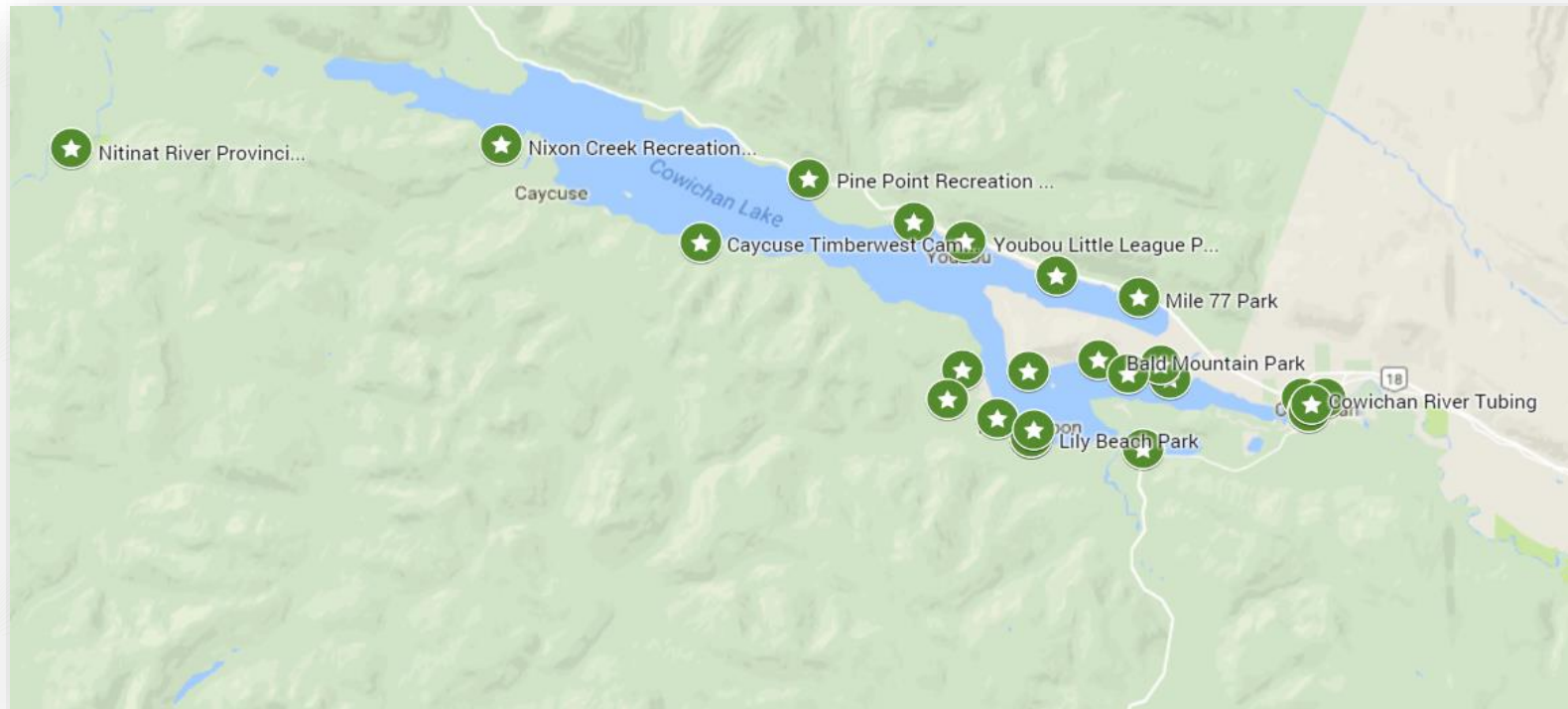


Figure 21. Activity and Park Asset Map

7.4 Hiking and Cycling Trails

The Cowichan Lake Region has more than 26 hiking and cycling trails that showcase the area's unique natural features. As identified in the trail destination audit, the majority of these trails are not visitor ready as they are located on private land or because they fail to meet other basic requirements (signage, regular maintenance, etc.). Figure 3 identifies the hiking tourism assets that, according to residents, have the greatest potential. Cycling trail development has been focused on the Beaver Lake Area to date, although private land owners have expressed interest in developing cycling trails on the north side of Cowichan Lake.

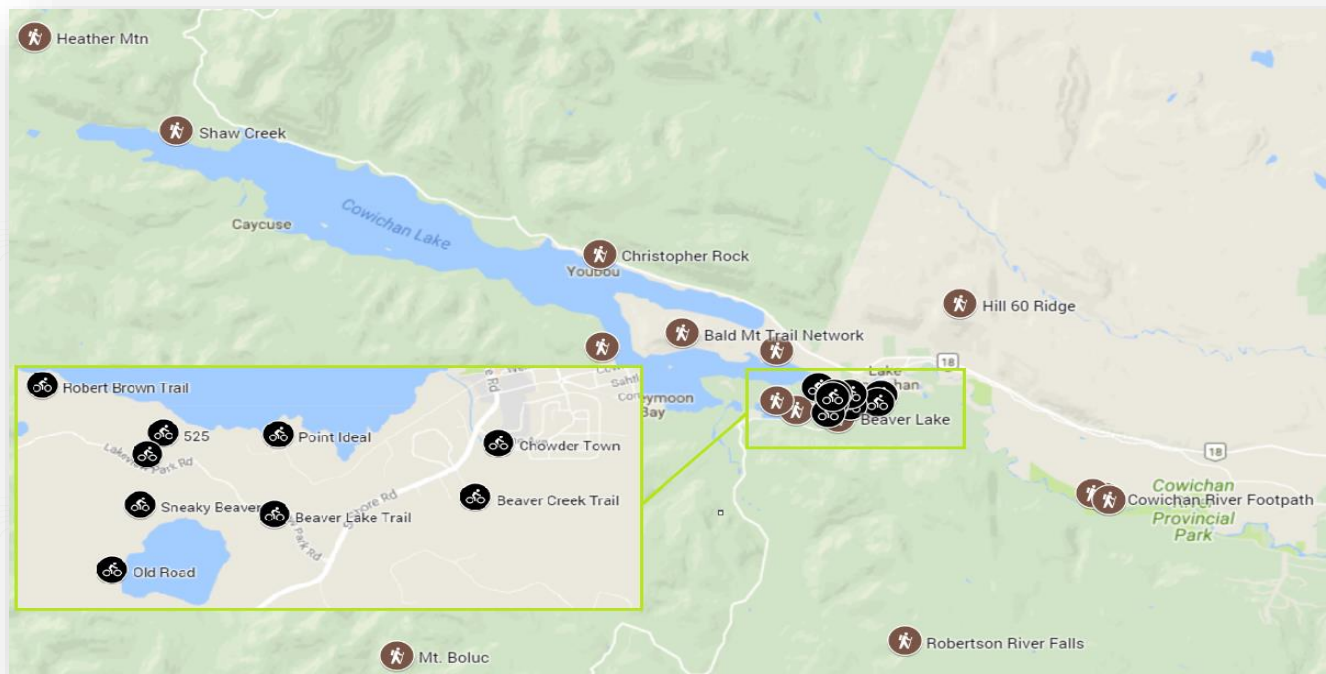


Figure 22. Hiking and Cycling Asset Map



COMPILED IN 2018