



West Bay Connector Trail

What We Learned

November 2024

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CITY OF
SALMON ARM

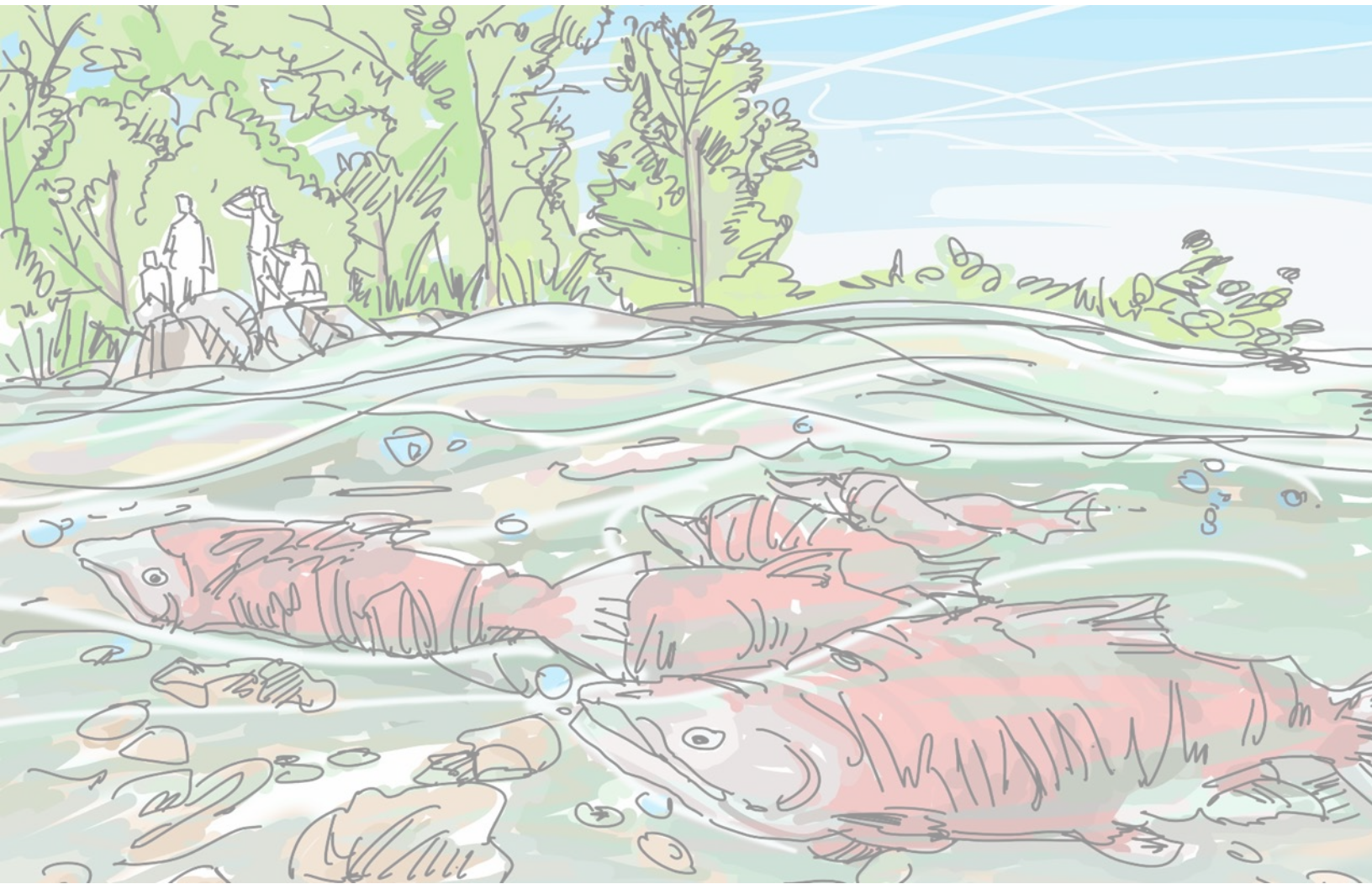


Acknowledgements

The City of Salmon Arm acknowledges the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people, with whom we share these lands and where we live and work together.

The West Bay Connector Trail Project Team would like to thank Elders, knowledge sharers and community members who shared their time, knowledge and vision for the trail. A special thank you to the Neskonlith and Adams Lake staff members for your support and assistance in helping us connect with your communities.

The West Bay Connector Trail project is an incredible example of the importance of our communities working together.



West Bay Connector Trail

What We Learned

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Introduction

Project Purpose

The City of Salmon Arm, Neskonlith Community (Switsemalph No. 3), and Adams Lake Community (Switsemalph No. 6 and 7) have begun the preliminary design for the West Bay Connector Trail.

Project Highlights

- **Safe and Connected Trail:** Approximately 6.5 km trail for walking, cycling, and rolling. from the existing Salmon Arm Wharf boardwalk through Neskonlith and Adams Lake Communities to the northern edge of the Adams Lake ending near Pierres Point Road (50 Ave NW).
- **Scenic Route:** Stretching from the Salmon Arm Wharf boardwalk through Neskonlith and Adams Lake Communities to the northern edge of the Adams Lake Community, ending near Pierres Point Road (50 Ave NW).
- **Community Collaboration:** Engaging with the Elders, knowledge sharers and community members to listen, learn and incorporate cultural knowledge and understanding.
- **Health and Growth:** Promoting community health and economic growth to create a four-season destination trail system.
- **Environmental Assessment:** Review the project trail area for environmental concerns and effects on local ecology and develop mitigation strategies to support habitat for the preliminary trail design.
- **Archaeological Assessment:** Background review and site visit to review and update archaeological information along the proposed trail corridor.

The preliminary design intends to honour and incorporate Neskonlith and Adam Lake traditional knowledge and connection to the land with technical insight including heritage/archaeological, environmental, engagement, trail design, landscape, active transportation, structural engineering, and safety.

This report summarizes the engagement activities and themes gathered from community conversations completed from September - November 2024 including technical review and engagement with the communities of Neskonlith and Adams Lake.




Engagement Overview

Engagement Purpose

The purpose of the first round of engagement was to gather feedback and insight from City, Neskonlith and Adams Lake communities, including Elders, knowledge sharers, and community members. Round 1 included review of the proposed trail alignment and surrounding areas including seeking input on the history, plant, fauna, people, sacred sites and trail impact to incorporate into the initial analysis of the site and inform the design.

The information that we heard and learned in this round of engagement will help us develop the preliminary design and trail location to bring back to the communities and public in winter 2024/2025.

What We Did

	<p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Project website▪ News release▪ Social media posts▪ Direct outreach to Adams Lake and Neskonlith Communities.
	<p>Technical Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Trail Technical Committee Meetings: September 23, 2024 & October 29, 2024▪ Adams Lake and Neskonlith Collaborative Field Work: October and November 2024
	<p>Community Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Consultation Workshop with Adams Lake and Neskonlith Communities: October 16, 2024▪ Interest Holder Interviews: October 17 & 18, 2024▪ Presentations to Community Chief and Council:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Adams Lake on October 15, 2024 & November 18, 2024○ Neskonlith on November 26, 2024○ The City of Salmon Arm on October 28, 2024

Who We Engaged

One of the most important steps in this project is connecting with the community members who have been involved, are interested, or will use the trail. Their feedback, insights, and experiences will help shape the early design of a trail to respect the cultural knowledge while meeting the needs and aspirations of those who will walk, cycle, roll, and explore along it.

We learned from the following groups in round 1 engagement.

- Trail Technical Committee: Adams Lake, Neskonlith and the City of Salmon, (three project sponsors) work together under the signed Memorandum of Understanding and provide guidance and direction for the project.
- Adams Lake Community: Chief and Council, Community members, Elders and Knowledge Sharers.
- Neskonlith Community: Chief and Council, Community members, Elders and Knowledge Sharers.
- Other: Shuswap Trail Alliance and the families who have lost loved ones



How We Engaged

Consultation Workshop & Interviews

This consultation workshop brought together the community, Elders, knowledge sharers from Adams Lake and Neskonlith communities and the project team to explore the trail corridor.

During this interactive session, project team members from landscape architecture, trails design, archaeology and environmental disciplines gathered insights on regional usage, connections, archaeological and cultural areas, and the environmental background. We then explored the community's vision for the trail's future use, incorporating the area's knowledge, culture, and history.

Following the consultation workshop, thirteen (13) interviews were held with Elders, knowledge sharers, trail advisors and community groups focused on gathering insights on the use, history and significance of the identified trail area, suggestions and vision for the trail.

What We Learned

Key Themes

- Safe and Connected Trail
- Scenic Route
- Community Collaboration
- Health and Growth
- Environmental
- Archaeological and Cultural

The West Bay Trail Connector Project is a symbol of community connection, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation. Through the sharing of stories and experiences, key themes emerged through the engagement activities highlighting the need for a safe and connected trail where people can get out in nature, improving health and wellness while gaining cultural knowledge, environmental awareness and education.

The West Bay Trail will leave a lasting legacy for the communities of Adams Lake, Neskonlith and Salmon Arm. By connecting people to nature, culture, and each other, the trail will enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. It will serve as a testament to the community's dedication to environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and community.

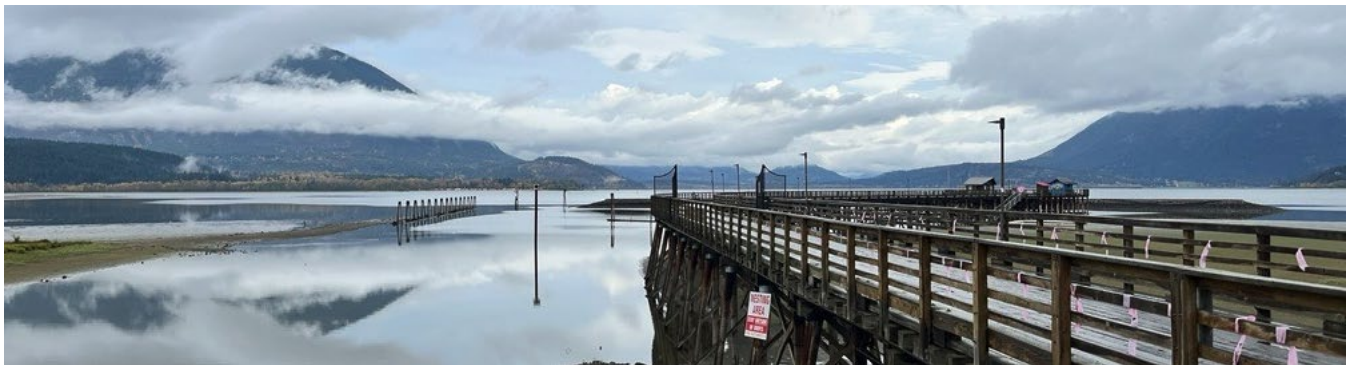
The following themes are summaries of what we heard from community members:

Safe and Connected Trail

Ensuring the trail is safe for all users was a key theme at the consultation workshop and in the interviews. Participants highlighted the importance of including safety design features such as lighting and fencing, along with planned maintenance throughout the year. Another important topic raised was ensuring emergency preparedness, including fire safety, stormwater management, and emergency response.

Safe Trail for Users

- Safety features in the design and planned and ongoing maintenance.
 - Design to include lighting, safety signs and fencing in areas of concern.
 - Maintained year-round, including snow and ice removal and provide covered areas to protect from heat related illnesses.
- Signage and wayfinding
 - Warning signs to keep people away from the train tracks.
 - Keep the trail clean with signage such as “What you pack in your pack out” and provide garbage collection in key locations.
- Emergency preparation and access
 - Emergency access for first responders including trail width and access to the highway.
 - Assess and ensure the trail is designed with protection from fire and high water hazards. Use the 100 year flood for the flood level elevation.



Scenic Route

As a scenic route, participants noted the importance of the design of the trail to accommodate various users including cyclists, walkers, Elders, and school age children.

They saw the trail as a place where people can come together. Many participants shared ideas for amenities and how it could be a place to build awareness and education to highlight culture, natural areas and the history of the area.

Trail Surface and Design

- Shared but separated trail for walkers and cyclists. Mixed feelings on the trail surface being paved, gravel or an elevated structure.
- Design to include privacy screening near communities, lighting to be able to see the trail and incorporate wood, carvings, art and design that represents traditional First Nation structures.
- Elevated areas identified from Peter Jannick Park, and over creek and river crossings. Land-based section through the park to West Harbour Village, ending at the rail crossing before the Salmon River.
- A direct and convenient route near the train tracks, matching or shorter than the train route.
- Highlighted the design of other trails such as the Sicamous to Armstrong Rail Trail, Enderby rail trail and KVR Trail from Osoyoos to Naramata.

Memorial

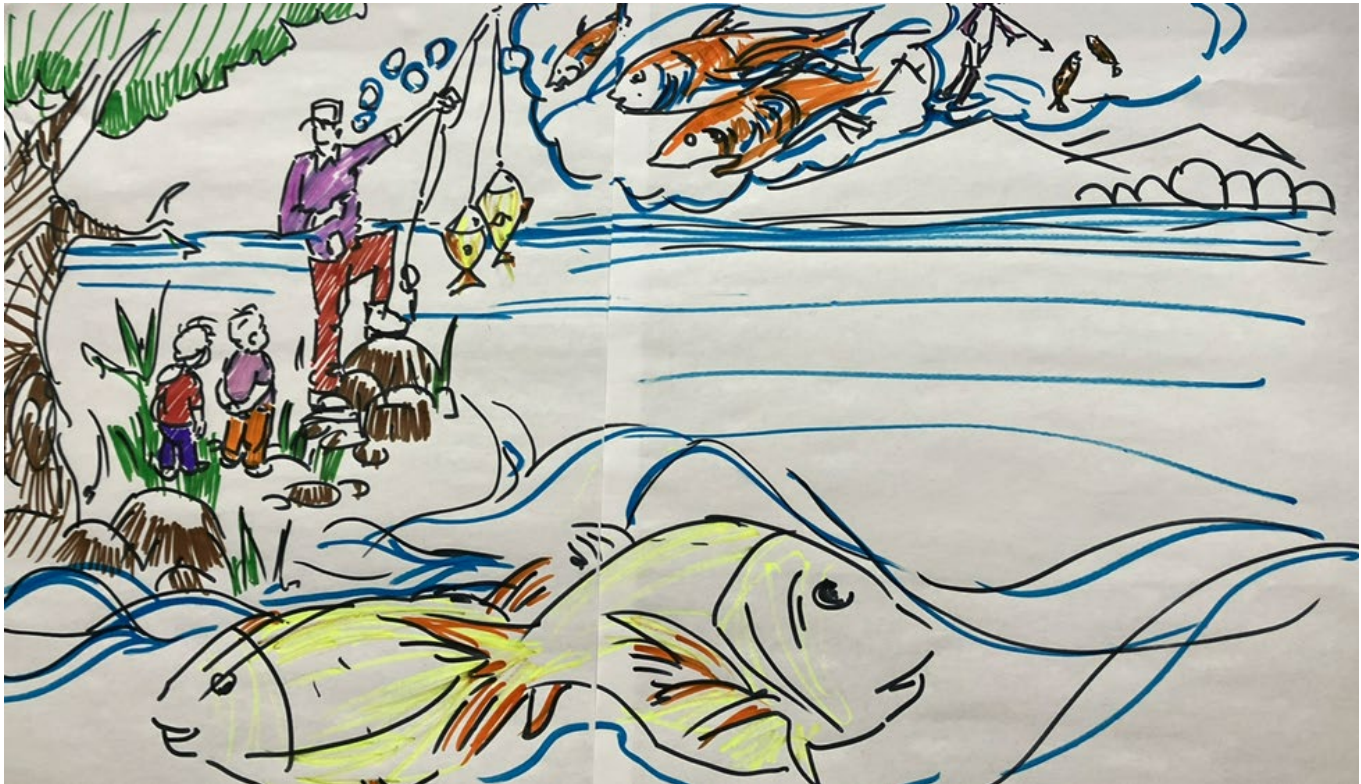
- Path of healing or Knucwetwe'cw "helping one another" to address the past trauma to recognize the people who have lost their lives.
- Discussion on how to recognize the people who have lost their lives with items such as memorial benches or plaques in an area of the trail where First Nations used to gather.
- Shared importance of recognizing people, but no monuments.

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Amenities:

- Include public amenities such as bathrooms, picnic tables, rest areas, benches to sit and talk and access to drinking water and accessibility for wheelchairs.
- Cultural viewpoints, demonstration areas, landmarks or outdoor classrooms to highlight activities such as spear fishing area near the mouth of Salmon River, fish drying racks, fishing camps, root houses, early trading areas, and other cultural highlights.
- Lookouts and bird watching areas to highlight eagle nests and natural features such as Mount Ida. Could include bird houses.
- Wayfinding signage including access points and areas of interest.



Community Collaboration

Through engaging with the Elders, knowledge sharers and community members shared information on the importance of the trail for connecting the communities of Salmon Arm, Neskonlith and Adams Lake. They shared the importance of the trail as a place of learning for each community and user groups and the importance of accessibility and connection points to all three communities.

Gathering and Pride of the Community

- The trail is seen as a place where the three communities of Salmon Arm, Neskonlith and Adams Lake are able to come together.
- Pride for future generations capturing knowledge and sharing and a place to learn including traditional fishing techniques using canoes, spearing and dugouts.

Connections in the Community

- Connections points to access services in the city, cultural sites, and regional trails while preventing people from walking on the tracks.
- Foreshore Trail is appreciated for its flat terrain and beautiful scenery, access to key services.
- Connection to the Glen Eagles Hockey Club and highlighting the importance of people coming together.

Cultural Sharing with Community

- Learning about gathering birch, reeds, saskatoon berry plants and other materials used to create traditional crafts such as basket weaving.
- Incorporate signage QR codes to link to more information, storytelling and photos.

Respecting Communities

- Concern for the public accessing private beaches cultural sites and gathering foods and plants used by First Nation communities.
- Preserve views and respect privacy of West Harbour Village residents by adding fencing or a barrier.
- Signs to educate and stop people from gathering traditional foods used by First Nations, particularly saskatoon berries, and promoting environmental stewardship.

Health and Growth

Participants noted the trail is an important part of the health and growth for all three communities. They highlighted making the trail convenient and accessible to be used in all seasons and how it could draw in all types of users for the economic wellbeing of all communities.

Health and Access

- Make it convenient and accessible to everyone, with considerations for safe places to sit and gather, good lighting, and suitable for all ages and abilities.
- Accommodate various users, including walking, joggers, hiking, scooters, bikers, pets (leash-only) and bird watchers.
- Envisioned to provide mobility access for those without access to a vehicle such as a scooter or golf cart to provide a mode of transportation for accessing services.
- Promoting physical activity and recreation year round including activities such as sleigh rides in the winter and access to skating on the river and lake.
- Creating a safe environment for kids to play, fish, and have clay fights.

Economic Opportunities:

- Explore economic opportunities for Salmon Arm to Neskonlith and Adams Lake to boost local economies by attracting tourists and local community members.
- Providing space for a cultural marketplace for selling traditional goods and foods (bannock, smoked fish and dried fruit).
- Potential to provide rentable or accessible mobility devices to help people get around, which could create business opportunities for rental services.

Connecting with Youth

- Importance of engaging young people and educating them about their culture.
- Include cultural education for schools and walks with Elders.



Environment

Participants highlight the importance of addressing environmental concerns, protecting wildlife, and maintaining community infrastructure to support the health and well-being of the area. The observations about wildlife and environmental changes provide valuable insights into the current state of the natural environment and areas to focus on to preserve, protect and highlight on the trail.

Birds (ducks, eagles, pheasants, ospreys)

- Meadows from the highway to the lake are a bird sanctuary and Peter Jannick an area where eagles and ospreys are protected.
- Floating Grebe nests have declined with decline in bull rushes (due to no more remaining areas to shelter nests). Pelicans migrated to west lake edge. Importance of working with Ducks Unlimited.
- Different birds today. Not as many Bluebirds or Robins but many gulls now. The gulls are here for a reason and it is important to study and learn from them.

Wildlife and Fish:

- Protecting wildlife such as ducks, eagles, raccoons, otters, bears, beavers, raccoons, and moose.
- Increased number of raccoons and rats that could be contributing to the decline of turtles and snakes near the tracks. Coyotes are near the Salmon River.
- There are less deer, moose, gophers and although beavers are around there are fewer beaver houses.
- People shared stories of fish so plentiful that you could walk on their backs including salmon, lingcod, brook trout, sucker fish, and carp. Fishery areas included the Slough, wharf and Leonard Creek.

Berry and Plant Preservation:

- Preserve huckleberries, cranberries and saskatoon berries, and other flora such as, wild hazelnuts, mushrooms, and bullrushes.

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- Removal of invasive species poison ivy, poison oak, canary grass and hawthorn. Increased weeds in the lake. Keep the cattle off the foreshore to protect sensitive ecology in the area.
- Restore traditional Trees and plants with projects like the Wapato Plant Revival Project led by Nancy Turner and students.
- Soapberry (Soopalallie) hard to find now, high bush cranberry, bullrush and toolies (cattails), mushrooms, Huckleberries.
- Planting of Cottonwood trees cleared out for fire protection and Birch trees for birch syrup.

Environmental Impact

- Environmental impact of the rail on the land including Willows turning black near the rail bed and potential contaminants from the trains/tracks up to 100 m from the tracks.
- Underground springs and swamps under the tracks and discharges on the far side of Sandy Point and contaminants from homeless encampments.
- Algal blooms in lake – farming (fertilizers), development, subsurface septic field (5-10 years old) and impact along the lakeshore.

Maintenance and Stewardship:

- Involve youth in the trail construction and ownership / stewardship include activities in the development such as hand or footprints in concrete.
- Effective garbage management, garbage cans, ashtrays, doggy bags and use of rip rap and willows to control erosion.
- Ensure fire safety measures are incorporated including the maintenance of overgrown trails.
- Re-routing of Salmon River over the past 60 years with the removal of seven Beaver dams from the highway to the lake and diverting the river near the mouth of Leonard creek. Sand is moving towards Tappen and there is quicksand in old river bed.

Archaeological and Culture

Participants shared the importance of highlighting the land, flora, fauna, and the cultural significance of First Nations. This includes important natural and cultural areas along the trail, such as eagle nests, medicinal plants, and traditional fishing locations. It also emphasizes the use of traditional language and place names, incorporating cultural stories and values, and promoting respect for areas of cultural significance.

Respectful of the Land, Flora, Fauna and People

- Sharing the importance of the land, animals, fish, and birds by identifying areas where people used and travelled their lands; where eagles nest or ducks would lay in the reeds; identifying essential plants, such as birch trees, used by community members; fishing areas and techniques; and other culturally significant items or traditions .
- Educational information along the trail about land-use, medicinal plants, and food resources such as salmon, bear, deer, soopolallie, wapato, and mushrooms.

Language, Place Names and Stories:

- Respectful learning about culture, land, and Secwepemc values and words and importance of incorporating traditional language throughout the trail.
- Incorporate traditional place names along the water named after females “givers of life.” In the early days firekeepers and smoke would identify locations. Gathering Elders to discuss the naming of places along the pathway.

Cultural Learning and Respect:

- A desire to share First Nations culture along the trail such as sharing stories along the trail about the sacred mountains, Little People, and Indigenous spirituality.
- Importance of respecting and educating culturally significant items such as hunting and gathering places, medicinal harvesting and uses, fishing technologies, and the material remains of cultural activities, as seen in belongings, cache pits, sweat and mat lodges, and pit houses.

Next Steps

Feedback from the first engagement round, including insights from Adams Lake and Neskonlith Elders and community members, will shape the trail's preliminary design and options. This community-focused process ensures ongoing input at each design stage.

In Round 2, an interactive campfire session with the same groups will review how initial feedback influenced the design and location options. The goal is to finalize the trail's location and core design elements with input from the community and public.

Round 3 will open in early 2025 to gather broader community input.

