

From: Standen, Jim ENV:EX <Jim.Standen@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: June 17, 2022 1:47 PM

To: Kim Smith <kim@totabc.com>

Subject: Support & funding opps for recreational trails

Reference: 390238

June 17, 2022

Kim Smith
Development Manager
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Foundation
Email: kim@totabc.com

Dear Kim Smith:

Thank you for your email of May 27, 2022, regarding funding and support for recreational trails. I am happy to hear you enjoyed my presentation to the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC last month, and I enjoyed speaking with you and Mike Overend more recently.

As of April 1, 2022, we have begun the integration of the Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) branch into the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. This has been an exciting time to learn about the RSTBC process and to get to know its stakeholders. Since April 1, I have had several discussions with staff regarding the Kettle Valley Rail (KVR) trail. The KVR trail remains an asset that presents both opportunities and challenges.

Like the communities of Princeton, Coalmont and Tulameen, the KVR trail was significantly damaged in the flood events of last November. The ministry has been working to respond to the immediate effects of the floods and to plan for the longer term. Should it be undertaken, repair of the KVR trail would be extremely costly. While I recognize the great importance of the KVR to communities, at this time government has not decided if the trail will be repaired.

Across its entire length, RSTBC and other agencies continue to prioritize critical infrastructure repair on the KVR trail. This has funded numerous repairs between the Kootenays and the Otter Valley including repairs to a bridge north of Tulameen, a landslide near Chain Lakes and a bridge west of Summerland. We appreciate the efforts of the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) in advocating for tourism opportunities on rail trails and are glad to learn that the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Foundation has been formed to help raise funds for this advocacy. Formation of the foundation was a key goal of TOTA's initial rail trail strategy, which RSTBC staff supported several years ago.

The ministry is partnering with other agencies to undertake an outdoor recreation research project focused on outdoor recreation participation, economic contributions and recreation trends. Funding has been secured to initiate the project this year. We will endeavor to share the project information at key milestones and look forward to working with provincial recreation organizations on subsequent phases.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Jim Standen
Assistant Deputy Minister
BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails Division