

Work begins on historic trestle

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Structure: New materials will be added to take the weight, making the landmark safe again

The action is picking up at the Kinsol Trestle worksite this month, now that the long-awaited rehabilitation work of the historic structure is finally underway as of June 28.

"Our fundraising team is excited to see the core rehabilitation work beginning," said Jack Peake, Kinsol Trestle Campaign chair. "However, we have not yet reached the overall funding goal. Every dollar raised from the local community will continue to unlock further matching government funds, all of which is important to secure in order to complete all of the rehabilitation work the Trestle desperately needs to ensure it remains as a standing legacy for decades to come."

If you plan to visit the rehabilitation site (directions are posted on www.kinsol.ca) you can only visit the Trestle site from the north end, where a public viewing area has been established with great views of the worksite. The trail access to the South end of the trestle (in Shawnigan Lake) has been closed, due to safety reasons during the construction period.

On July 15, the project passed another milestone, when the first "bent" was lifted from the Trestle. In all, 17 of the original 46 bents (the underlying structures of the Trestle) will be substantially rebuilt, using a lot of new materials to bring them to a high standard, structurally.

Steel trusses will support the walkway on top of the trestle.

"The steel trusses will remove the load from all of the material that's in between and direct it to the active banks," explained Gord Macdonald of Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing, the prime contractor.

The result is that the majority of the original structure can remain in place without requiring major rehabilitation work before it can be put back into use.

"This design lets us make the Trestle safe, while maintaining the historic nature of the structure. We're actually performing a very delicate task, which is to conserve a historic structure, that we care a lot about and hold in very high regard," he said.

The rehabilitation project is on target to be largely completed by March 31, 2011, pending additional funds raised in the coming months, in preparation for an official reopening of the Trestle in early summer, 2011.

While work is now underway, the campaign to raise \$2 million from the local community continues. Included in the rehabilitation project are landscaping improvements on both ends of the trestle, a walkway down into the Koksilah River canyon to view the Trestle from below and an information kiosk.

Donations to the Save the Historic Kinsol Trestle rehabilitation project can be made on-line at www.kinsol.ca or by contacting Diane Myrden or Kim Martin at the campaign office at 250-709-1087 or kinsol@cfcowichan.ca