

Trestle has government support, does it have yours?

John McKinley, Cowichan NewsLeader
October 1 2009

Now all the Kinsol trestle needs to survive is you. With federal and provincial funding now secured, the local fundraising drive is about to kick off in earnest.

Money for the Kinsol Trestle has been guaranteed, but don't expect hammers and saws to be put to the old wooden structure just yet, warns the chair of the Cowichan Foundation, Kinsol Trestle Capital Campaign.

"I was hoping we could get this thing off the ground and started this fall, but there's some detail work we have to do, like do we hire an overall project manager, or do we have the Cowichan Valley Regional District manage it from inside," said Jack Peake.

"That's ultimately a CVRD decision because they are really the overseers of this project."

On Thursday, the federal government, through the Building Canada fund, committed \$1.885 million towards the restoration project, with a matching amount by the province.

"For me it's an absolute thrill to have this money now and know the project will go ahead," said Peake.

"It's money that has been talked about for ages and the federal government has finally put the money we've been waiting for such a long time in the pot."

It was vital the federal government coughed up the cash first so the province would add matching funds.

"All of these things are tied together because the feds have this big pot of money for various projects, like the Kinsol Trestle, but it required the same kind of funding from the province to make it work," Peake said.

In addition to the government money, the Cowichan Valley Regional District received a commitment of \$1 million from the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

The \$4.8 million in funding leaves the Kinsol Trestle Capital Campaign still looking to raise as much as \$1.2 million from major sponsors, the public and other potential government sources to finish the rehabilitation of the historic local landmark.

Peake said he has a meeting next week with his fundraising expert and to go over what they have to do.

"We have people now saying I will give you this, and I'll give you that — whether it's cash or in kind (donations) — and we now need that in writing," he said.

"We need those people to say yes, here it is' because of course those federal and provincial funds are tied into us having the other one-third of the money."

Peake said the project still wouldn't go ahead until provincial engineers to put their stamp of approval on the drawings that have been created for the trestle.

The rehabilitation work on the 614-foot Kinsol Trestle, which soars 145 feet above the Koksilah River near Shawnigan Lake, will replace unsound timbers, reinforce eight structural trestle bents and build a new 614-foot walkway along the top for the enjoyment of hikers, tourists, cyclists and horseback riders.

The rehabilitated Kinsol Trestle will be part of the Trans Canada Trail and complete a significant river crossing on the 120-km Cowichan Valley Trail route. More details about the project are available at www.kinsol.ca.