

Tikwalus Heritage Trail Backgrounder

OVERVIEW

The Tikwalus Trail is one of B.C.'s most historic and scenic trails. It offers hikers amazing views of the Fraser Canyon and a chance to connect with First Nations, Fur Trade, Gold Rush and Railway history. Just a two-hour drive from Vancouver, the trail is an ideal day hike or an overnight camping destination.

FIRST NATIONS FOUNDATION

Tikwalus Trail lies within the traditional territory of the Nlaka'pamux Nation, near the First Nation communities of Spuzzum, Boston Bar and Boothroyd. This ancient trade route started at the village of Tikwalus and climbed up to Lake Mountain, which offered ample supplies of food and raw materials. The forests along the trail contain Yew, Western Red Cedar and Paper Birch trees which were extensively used by Native people for supplies and medicinal purposes. The First Nation use of the trail is evident from the large number of Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) along and nearby the well-travelled route.

The trail also linked the people of the Fraser River with the Nicola Valley. It was even used during the winter, when First Nations travellers used snowshoes to cross over the mountains and thus avoid the rapids and shear rock canyons of Hell's Gate and other perils of the Fraser Canyon.

FUR TRADE FIASCO

In 1846, the Oregon Treaty forced the Hudson's Bay Company to look for an alternative route to the Pacific. Alexander Caulfield Anderson, a Chief Trader for the HBC, enlisted First Nations guides to show him the Tikwalus Trail in June of 1847, hoping it could be used to ship furs. The company expanded the trail into a "horse portage" and in 1848, sent the annual brigade down its rugged length. It was a disaster. Lack of food for the horses and difficult water crossings resulted in 70 horses and 22 valuable packs being lost. The HBC abandoned the route in favour of a new trail at Fort Hope.

GOLD RUSH ROUTE

A decade after the Fur Trade disaster, the Fraser River Gold Rush saw over 30,000 gold seekers flood into the Fraser Canyon. During the 1858 rush, the trail was rehabilitated and used to get pack trains from Spuzzum to Boston Bar. By 1863, the Cariboo Wagon Road was built through the Fraser Canyon, replacing the Tikwalus Trail.

RAILROAD RESOURCE

In 1881, the Canadian Pacific Railway re-opened what was now referred to as the Old Mountain Trail. They used it to supply their construction camps above Boston Bar when the Cariboo Wagon Road was closed by an extremely high spring freshet. The trail continued to be a convenient way to avoid the cliffs of the Black Canyon and Hell's Gate on the way to Boston Bar and Lytton.

RECREATION REVIVAL

With the advent of the railways and the Trans-Canada Highway, the Tikwalus Trail was once again left largely to First Nations use. But by the 1980s, historians like Bob Harris and Charles Hou had brought students, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts back to the trail. Appreciating its historic and cultural importance, the North Shore Hikers and members of the Vancouver Natural History Society performed annual trail maintenance. About 15 years ago the Spuzzum First Nation re-opened the trail, and in 2000, the Ministry of Forests constructed campsite facilities.

NEW PATHWAYS PARTNERSHIP

In the fall of 2010, the New Pathways to Gold Society formed a partnership with the Spuzzum First Nation and Hope Mountain Centre to repair Tikwalus Trail and improve its facilities. The \$98,000 project will educate trail users with interpretive signs that reveal the historic significance of the route and the traditional use of the forest by First Nations. Today, the heritage spirit of the Tikwalus Trail along with the dramatic geography of the Fraser Canyon offers hikers a rewarding recreational and cultural experience.



Recreation Sites
and Trails BC



Trail Information

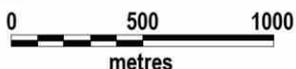
- Elevation gain: 788 m
- Distance: 6 km to campsite
- Difficulty: moderate to high
- Campsite facilities: fire ring, tent pads, table, food cache, outhouse



Please respect the trail's non-motorized status and "Heritage Trail" designation.

LEGEND

- Maintained Trail
- Distance from Trailhead (km)
- Elevation in metres
- Unmaintained Trails
- Viewpoints
- Interpretive Signs
- Campsite
- Parking Areas
- Picnic Area
- Highway
- 1926 Highway Route
- Railroad
- Elevation Contours (40m)
- Nlaka'pamux Reserves
- Provincial Park



Lambert Conformal Conic Meridian: 121° West
World Geodetic System 1984 Parallels: 49° and 50° North

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Tikwalus Heritage Trail

Possible location of historic Nlaka'pamux village of Tikwalus

SOURCES

Trail Data:
Anders Hopperstead
Kelley Cook
R.C. Harris
Base Data:
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