

CDMC

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Bedwell Valley Trail Rejuvenation (event) [return to Reports list](#)

Sat Aug 14 to Wed Aug 18, 2010

Leader: **Bob St.John**

Co-Leader:

Seven members of the CDMC joined 17 other Friends of Strathcona Park volunteers from Gold River, Campbell River, Victoria, and the Comox Valley on a continuing project to rejuvenate the Bedwell Valley Trail. The Friends made the trail in the 1990's, utilizing an old logging road from Bedwell Sound to You Creek, and then building a trail up the head of the valley to join existing Park trails at Bedwell Lake. A 70 meter suspension bridge was a major project in itself to replace a missing road bridge.

The trail has now fallen into disrepair, and has been closed by Parks for the last few years, mainly due to the 'Living' bridge being condemned. In the winter of 2009 the suspension bridge collapsed from an unusual snow load. Much of the old road is overgrown, and washouts by the Bedwell River and it's many tributaries have made travel problematic. The trail up to Bedwell Lake is also now hard to follow.

Over the last 6 years Clayoquot Wilderness Resort has been pushing the government to be allowed to run horses up to You Creek, well into the Park. This will require construction of major bridges over the Bedwell and numerous side streams. The Friends do not see this as adhering to minimal human impact, and oppose it.

Last year a project was initiated to rejuvenate the hiking trail for two reasons: 1) to re-establish a unique alpine to ocean trail that would connect with existing Park trails, and 2) to show that volunteers can establish low impact trails, negating the need for more intrusive commercial trails. Phase I was the re-tensioning and improved anchoring of the suspension bridge, completed in Oct 09.

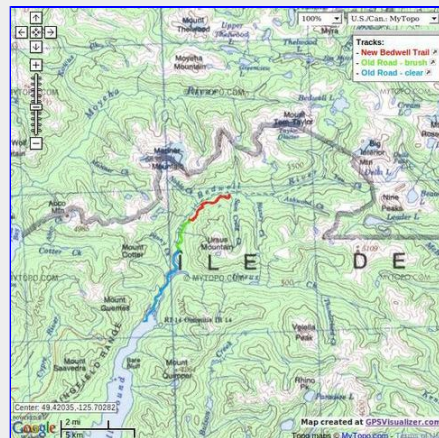
Phase II was to establish a new section of trail on the south side of the Bedwell River from the Living Bridge to the Ashwood Crossing. This eliminates two Bedwell River crossings, the Noble Creek crossing, and a section where the river has washed the road out to cliffs. In June an advance party flagged the route, and this last trip the first half (4.9 km) from the Living Bridge to Sam Craig Creek was brushed out. Next year Phase II will be completed, and hopefully the trail up to Bedwell Lake spruced up.

The 5 day trip from Aug 14 - 18 went extremely well... surpassing our wildest expectations. The new trail offers some great views of the valley and its surrounding peaks (Big Interior, Tom Taylor, Mariner, Ursus, and Cotter). It travels through mature open forest, over rock bluff ridges, by lily covered ponds, and along the Bedwell River. In contrast the existing old road offers little to view, and while one can hear the river nearby, access is difficult. Soon it may be covered in horse doo as well. There are three good camping spots along the river: 1) at the suspension bridge, 2) on a river gravel bar midway up the trail, and 3) at Sam Craig Creek.

The very best aspect of the trip was the camaraderie of the crew, and while they

worked hard, they also took time to relax, to swim in the river, and to explore. Everyone returned with a sense of pride at doing something useful for the Park. The Friends would also like to thank the CDMC for use of their trail building tools (mainly clippers).

[More photos](#) are available on the Friends website.



We're halfway up to Bedwell Lake
 [Bob St. John photo]



New trail offers good camping and interesting vistas
 [Bob St. John photo]



Water taxi up Bedwell Sound from Tofino
 [Bob St. John photo]



Bedwell River gravel bar
 [Bob St. John photo]



Rocky bluffs offer great views
 [Bob St. John photo]



Mariner Mtn.
 [Bob St. John photo]



Mature open forest
[Bob St.John photo]



One of several ponds
[Bob St.John photo]



Brushed out trail
[Bob St.John photo]



Group on the dock
[Bob St.John photo]

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