



## BEECHVILLE LAKESIDE TIMBERLEA RAILS TO TRAILS

### PRESENTATION REGARDING TRAIL FUNDING

APRIL 18, 2011

Good evening, I'm Catherine Klefenz, chair of the Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails Association and with me are members of the board of directors. Our group is a member of the Halifax Regional Trails Association which council accepted as the voice of trails for HRM on April 22, 2008.

The BLT Trail begins in Beechville next to the Coca Cola plant in the Lakeside Industrial Park and continues for 13 km to the highway 3 crossing. The St. Margaret's Bay Area Rails to Trails begins at that point. Our trail is 'motorized' and as such is for bikers, joggers, walkers, cross-country skiers, snowmobiles and ATVs. Motorbikes are not permitted. The BLT Trails Association was also active in constructing 750 metres of the new Chain of Lakes Trail (COLT) and the trail around Bayers Lake.

The Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails Association was formed in February, 2000. Almost immediately we applied for grants and began working on construction of the BLT Trail. We are now in the maintenance phase which continues to require much planning, work and expense. Volunteer efforts have always been and continue to play a huge role in the operation of our trail. We take pride in the fact that our BLT Trail is one of the best maintained and finest trails in the province.

During the past two years, BLT was busy with organized cycling and walking groups. One of our most popular activities was Nordic Walking led by volunteer members. This summer we have plans to begin a bird watching program. Our celebration of International Trails Day has been a hit with children and adults for the past seven years. It is a family fun day of recreation, games and treats.

A goal of the BLT Rails to Trails Association is to make our trail a year round enjoyable experience for all user groups. This past winter, we arranged for snowmobilers to run the trail and pack the snow following snowstorms. We requested cooperation of ATV users in not running the trail for a couple days following snowstorms to allow packing to take place. This seemed to be quite successful.

We are a multi-use trail which includes ATVs, and we therefore have suffered over the past number of years by receiving only fifty per cent maintenance funding from HRM. Other trails receive one hundred percent and we feel we should not be penalized because we have ATVs on our trail. We place a great deal of emphasis on physical exercise and active transportation on our trail and we therefore do not wish to accept funding from the OHV Fund, which was mainly created to assist OHV trails. Our trail is a "dead end" trail and has no legal turn off's. For us to carry the burden of having to find matching money every year takes a lot of volunteer time.

One of the costly parts of maintenance is clearing new growth along the side of the 13 km trail. This is never ending. We do all this with our volunteers at considerable savings. We also install and repair all signage and benches, collect garbage from our 14 garbage bins and keep the trail clean. Money is required when culverts need to be replaced. Pot holes and washouts must be repaired. We presently require asphalt work at some road crossings where washouts continue. At times, extra fill is required and grading becomes necessary.

We would like to continue maintaining our trail to high standards for safety and aesthetic reasons. This can only happen with appropriate funding. I cannot stress to you enough, the importance of one hundred per cent funding. This will be absolutely necessary to keep our trail vibrant and safe for our many trail users.

We would like to thank HRM Council for its past and future support in both capital and maintenance funding. We look forward to another productive year of maintaining the BLT Trail.

Catherine Klefenz

Chair BLT rails to trails

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