



Our Commitment to  
**INDIGENOUS  
RECONCILIATION**

2023-2024 REPORT



Prepared April 2024



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# THANK YOU!

Thank you to the 2023-2024 Indigenous Advisory Committee members for your invaluable feedback, ideas and guidance:

- ✓ George Lafond, Trans Canada Trail Board Member
- ✓ Kevin Eshkawkogan
- ✓ Donald Hanson
- ✓ Andrea Lafond
- ✓ Catherine Langille
- ✓ Candace Leffler
- ✓ Richard Peter
- ✓ Lois Phillips
- ✓ Rob Thomas
- ✓ Ramzey Zallum
- ✓ Emma Mohns, Outgoing Chair

In “Traveler, There Is No Path” Spanish poet Antonio Machado wrote:



“Traveler, your footprints  
Are the path and nothing more;  
Traveler, there is no path,  
The path is made by walking.”

Reconciliation calls for us to make a new path by walking it together. I encourage everyone to consider doing a small part of that walking on the Trans Canada Trail.

**George Lafond,**  
Trans Canada Trail Board member and member  
of the Indigenous Advisory Committee



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

In March 2021, Trans Canada Trail made a commitment to Indigenous reconciliation. This commitment informs our work, including planning, programming and decision-making processes. The actions we take will:

- ✔ Represent Indigenous peoples and communities on their terms. We will not be an “arbiter” of truth.
- ✔ Increase representation of Indigenous people in our organization and encourage local Trail groups to do the same.
- ✔ Amplify the voices of Indigenous peoples by supporting Trail initiatives that convey the culture and history of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and the land they live on; by encouraging and supporting the local Indigenous language on Trail signage; and by including Indigenous voices in Trans Canada Trail materials.



As a national organization, we recognize the imperative to acknowledge Indigenous truths and commit to tangible actions for reconciliation.

We are responsible for defining these actionable steps, in collaboration with Indigenous voices, and I am grateful for the guidance provided by members of our Indigenous Advisory Committee. It is our priority to bring people together, to connect with the land's natural beauty, and to ensure the Trail promotes and facilitates reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

**Mathieu Roy,**  
Chief Executive Officer, Trans Canada Trail



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The recognition of territory shows respect for Indigenous peoples. It testifies to their presence, both historical and current, and ensures a sharing of knowledge between current and future generations.

This recognition and respect are crucial to the establishment and maintenance of healthy and reciprocal relationships, and contributes to reconciliation, a process to which Trans Canada Trail is committed. While acknowledging traditional territory is highly desirable, it is only the beginning of the process that is needed to cultivate strong relations with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

## Trans Canada Trail acknowledges that:

The Trans Canada Trail is situated on the traditional territory of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples from coast to coast to coast. Trans Canada Trail also acknowledges that the Trail includes land and water routes that were created and used, both historically and presently, by Indigenous peoples as seasonal travel and trade routes. We support community efforts to sustain a relationship with Indigenous peoples based on respect, dignity, trust and cooperation, in the process of advancing truth and reconciliation.



## To demonstrate our commitment:

- ✓ We support Indigenous leadership as they work on Trail development projects on traditional territories.
- ✓ We encourage Trail groups to develop partnerships with local Indigenous communities, and to recognize and honour First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples by acknowledging the traditional territories through which the Trail passes.
- ✓ We have established an Indigenous Advisory Committee comprised of individuals from Indigenous communities to provide guidance and advice to Trans Canada Trail staff as it relates to Indigenous communities and culture.



## 2023-2024 REPORT

### Calls to Action:

Trans Canada Trail's Commitment to Indigenous Reconciliation was developed based on the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action. Although these Calls to Action are directed to government, they provide focus and direction to all organizations in changing policies and programs, and participating in reconciliation.

Below are the activities, organized by Call to Action, undertaken by Trans Canada Trail between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024. The Trail projects, found under Language and Culture, Sport and Reconciliation, and Youth Programs, amount to a commitment of over \$650,000 towards projects that support Indigenous communities, share Indigenous stories, build skills among Indigenous youth and invest in Indigenous tourism destinations. Organizational practices and communications are found under Business and Reconciliation and Media and Reconciliation.

Our commitment to reconciliation is ongoing, and our actions will continue year after year.



### LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

#### Call to Action 14:

*We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:*

14 (i)

Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.

14 (iv)

The preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.

14 (v)

Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.

## Actions – Completed:

- ✔ **Tuktoyaktuk (NWT):**  
The community of Tuktoyaktuk, Trans Canada Trail's Point Zero North, developed interpretive signs in English, French and Inuvialuktun.
- ✔ **We'koqma'q Monument and Workshops (NS):**  
We'koqma'q First Nation Elders worked with a professional artist to create a monument for Truth and Reconciliation, with a focus on elements that have healed their journey.
- ✔ **We'koqma'q Longhouse Construction (NS):**  
We'koqma'q First Nation constructed a longhouse near the Trans Canada Trail as a gathering place to share storytelling, deliver programs, and foster healing and reconciliation.
- ✔ **Itijjagiq Trail Signage Audit (NU):**  
A signage audit was conducted during the summer along the remote Itijjagiq Trail to identify the types and locations of signs needed.
- ✔ **ᐅᐅᐅᐅ Pêmiska Trails (SK):**  
Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation added signage and trailheads along their 25 km of new sections of Trans Canada Trail.
- ✔ **Atlantic View Trail (NS):**  
Trans Canada Trail signage in the Mi'kmaw language was installed.

## Actions – Underway:

- ✔ **Wagmatcook Trail Signage Branding, Art and Design (NS):**  
This signage project includes Indigenous art, information on traditional medicines, community history and folklore.
- ✔ **Decolonizing Place Narratives (ON):**  
This art installation is a collaboration among the City of Guelph and the Decolonizing Place Narratives Research Collective, Indigenous knowledge keepers, artists, scholars, and residents, and will be placed in John Galt Park.
- ✔ **Winnipeg Trails Signage (MB):**  
Trans Canada Trail signs in both Ojibwe and Cree will be placed on the Trail in Winnipeg.
- ✔ **Beardy's & Okemasis' Gate Sign (SK):**  
Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation is adding three trailheads, five interpretive panels and multiple gate signs to their new trail.
- ✔ **Bealach Brèagha Signage (NS):**  
Trans Canada Trail signage in the Mi'kmaw language is being installed along this Trail section.
- ✔ **Echo Valley Art Installation (SK):**  
In partnership with Standing Buffalo and Pasqua First Nation, Saskatchewan Parks is installing three steel art panels created by Harley Sinclair, member of Peepeekisis Cree Nation in Echo Valley Provincial Park.



- ✔ **DeCew House Heritage Park Improvements (ON):**  
Interpretive signage in Mohawk, English and French will be installed at the First Nations Peace Monument.
- ✔ **Tuktoyaktuk (NT):**  
Work is underway on the design, fabrication and installation of two interpretive signs in English, French and Inuvialuktun.
- ✔ **Town of Truro Signage with Mi'kmaq language (NS):**  
Trans Canada Trail signage with Mi'kmaw language will be installed along the Trail in Truro.
- ✔ **Experiential Bike Hub and Interpretive Signage (MB):**  
Development of a family-oriented bike hub is underway along South Whiteshell Trail and will include interpretive signage about the Anishinaabe and the 7 Sacred Laws of the People and the Land.
- ✔ **Bragg Creek Kiosk (AB):**  
Development and installation of a new kiosk to include the history of local Chief Tom Snow, a Stoney Nakoda Chief, as discovered by Stoney Nakoda Nation researcher in partnership with the Bragg Creek Trail Association.

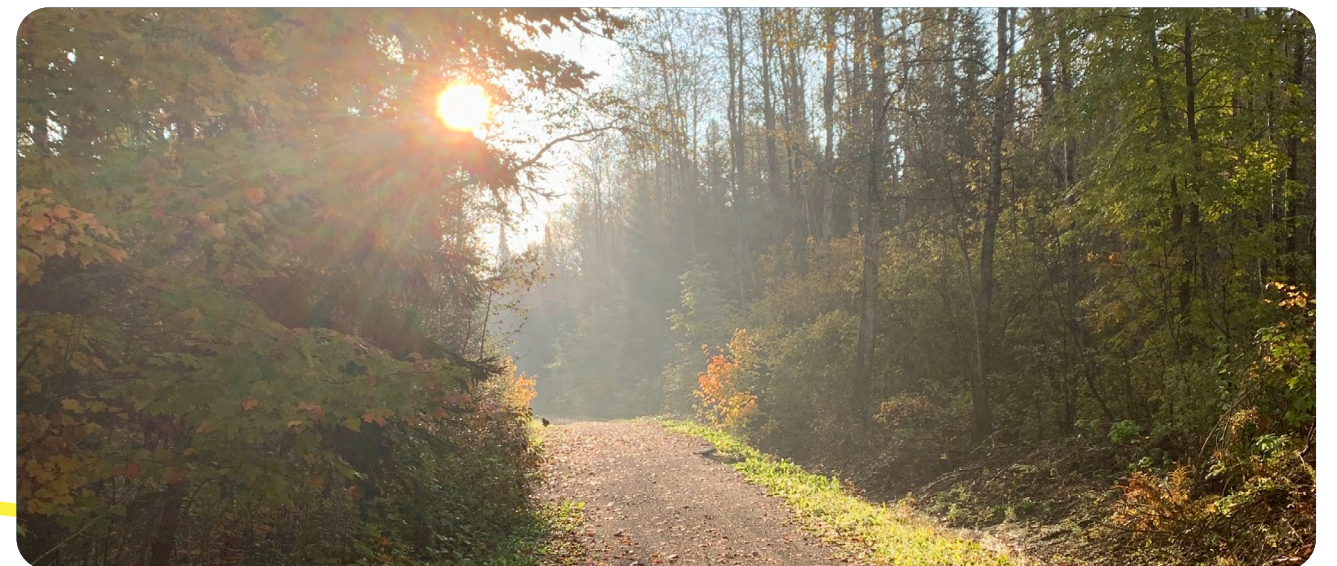
## SPORT AND RECONCILIATION

### Call to Action 89:

*We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.*

### Call to Action 90:

*We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.*



## Actions – Completed:

- ✔ **Bebamikawe Memorial Trail (ON):**  
Manitoulin Island’s Bebamikawe Memorial Trail has joined the Trans Canada Trail network.
- ✔ **Ojibway Park Nature Trail Phase 5 (ON):**  
Garden River First Nation completed development and enhancement of the trail to improve access and inclusion.
- ✔ **DeCew House Heritage Park Improvements (ON):**  
Establishment of an Indigenous-focused heritage trail connecting the site to other historic and cultural destinations.
- ✔ **Wanuskewin Heritage Park Safety and Access Study (SK):**  
To improve visitor experience and a historic site, the Wanuskewin Heritage Park conducted a study to examine accessibility, security, environmental and educational components.
- ✔ **Pays Plat First Nation Trail Maintenance (ON):**  
Funding was provided to support the efforts of volunteers to clean up the trailhead, install signage and complete brush clearing along the trail.
- ✔ **We'koqmaq First Nation Trail Maintenance (NS):**  
Funding was allocated to clear pathways, collect debris from seasonal damage and prepare a healing garden.
- ✔ **Madawaska Maliseet First Nation (NB):**  
Funding was provided to clean up the trail in advance of the busy season and provide maintenance where needed.

- ✔ **Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation Event (MB):**  
Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation partnered with the Crow Wing Trail Association to organize a Mother Earth Care Gathering.

## Actions – Underway:

- ✔ **Stswecem'c Xget'tem First Nation (BC):**  
Trans Canada Trail is providing funding for the maintenance of existing trails.
- ✔ **Buffalo Point (MB):**  
A student “green team” from Buffalo Point First Nation will be engaged in trail repairs that are needed as a result of flood damage.
- ✔ **Miawpukik First Nations (NL):**  
The Miawpukik Walking Trail is being extended, outdoor washrooms are being built and three benches are being added along the trail.
- ✔ **Penelakut Tribe Trail Maintenance (BC):**  
Funds are being provided to hire a crew for maintenance along a local trail system, built in 2022.
- ✔ **Potlotek First Nation (NS):**  
Funds are being provided to support a project to extend an existing trail to connect the school, recreational facilities and the community health centre.
- ✔ **Snpink'tn (BC):**  
The community is working on planning, community engagement, youth program development and trail building along the Moccasin Mile Trail.



✔ **We'koqma'q First Nation (NS):**

This project is centred around ice fishing, aiming to promote outdoor recreation.

✔ **Skowkale, Aitchelitz, Yakwekwioose First Nations (S.A.Y. Lands) (BC):**

Funding is being provided for the development and stewardship of an accessible walking trail as an alternative to walking on a dangerous road.

✔ **M'Chigeeng First Nation (ON):**

Funds are being provided to conduct an assessment, create a trail plan with mapping and complete an estimate for additional work.

✔ **Saulteau First Nation (BC):**

Funding is being provided to perform maintenance duties along the Fire Lake Trail including brushing, weeding and general cleanup.

✔ **Lennox Island Path of Forefathers (PEI):**

This project includes trail improvements, stewardship initiatives and the integration of Indigenous cultural elements.

✔ **Dzawada'enuxw First Nation (BC):**

Crews are being hired to clear both new and existing Gwayi Trails.

✔ **North Slave Métis Alliance (NWT):**

The catastrophic 2023 wildfire season highlighted the need for regular maintenance activities at trail access points, along the trails and sites of cultural importance to reduce future fire risk.

✔ **Skidegate Trail Maintenance (BC):**

Trans Canada Trail is providing funding for ongoing trail maintenance, danger tree removal and repairs of areas washed away by runoff.

✔ **Maintenance at Point Grondine Park (ON):**

Funds are being provided to resurface trail sections and add a boardwalk.

✔ **N'Quatqua First Nation Trail Maintenance (BC):**

Funds are being provided for widening and clearing of overgrown brush along two local trails.

✔ **Maintenance along Bebamikawe Memorial Trail (ON):**

Trans Canada Trail funds are being used for trail maintenance, including bear proofing, trail markers, resurfacing and maintenance of the accessible fitness trail.

✔ **Quilakwa Nature Trails (BC):**

Funding from Trans Canada Trail are being used by Splatstin for the upgrade of nature trails, including the addition of a dock with interpretive signage.

✔ **Wagmatcook Trail Implementation (NS):**

Wagmatcook First Nation and a trail committee of Elders and youth are developing a trail along with a footbridge and a ceremonial gathering place with a medicine wheel.

✔ **ᑭᑦᑭᑦ Pêmiska Trails (SK):**

Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation is developing a 25-km trail that will form an integral component of a new Indigenous tourism destination.



## We'koqma'q Installs Monuments along the Skye River Trail

A group of residential school survivors collaborated with an artist to create these works, integrating elements that have contributed to their own healing.



Monument for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls



Monument for Indigenous Veterans



Monument for Truth and Reconciliation

## YOUTH PROGRAMS

### Call to Action 66:

*We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.*

### Actions – Completed:

#### ✔ Trail Week at OYEP:

Trans Canada Trail offered one week of Trail education at seven camps across Canada. The program focuses on trail stewardship and maintenance, and 182 Indigenous youth participated.

#### ✔ Winnipeg Youth Education Workshop:

Trans Canada Trail worked with Manitoba Parks to conduct a workshop on trail stewardship for 15 Indigenous youth living in Winnipeg.

#### ✔ Wikwemikong Youth Employment (ON):

Trans Canada Trail provided subsidies for wages and training costs for three local First Nation youth to work in the trail sector.

#### ✔ Carcross Youth Employment (YK):

Trans Canada Trail provided subsidies for six youth from Carcross/Tagish First Nation to construct and maintain the local mountain bike system as part of their Singletrack to Success Program.



✔ Trails BC Youth Employment Program (BC):

Trans Canada Trail provided funding to Trails BC to hire four youth from Tsawwassen First Nation to work in the trail sector.

The youth initiatives listed are largely supported by funds raised through the efforts of Trans Canada Trail's Philanthropy team, including the sharing of the work of Indigenous groups with potential and existing supporters.



To me, embracing the trails means not only navigating the physical paths but also fostering meaningful connections along the way. Contributing to this journey both socially and physically is empowering. As an Indigenous woman, I am happy having and using my voice to amplify the voices of Indigenous youth, creating more space for them to thrive and be heard.

**Catherine Langille,**  
Member of the Indigenous Advisory Committee

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

### Call to Action 57:

*We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.*





## Actions:

Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, several Trans Canada Trail staff participated in training opportunities related to Indigenous history, culture and reconciliation.

- ✔ **Indigenous Canada (University of Alberta)**  
Explores key issues facing Indigenous peoples today from a historical and critical perspective.
- ✔ **Indigenous Protocols for Fundraisers**  
Taught by Morgan Kalk, member of Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and Rowena Veylan, this workshop shares the importance of learning from Indigenous communities to foster better relationships and honour protocols as respectful visitors.
- ✔ **What Indigenous Tourism Professionals Want DMOs to Know**  
Taught by Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's Zane Buchanan, member of Saskatchewan Métis Nation, this webinar aims to help those working in tourism marketing to successfully collaborate with Indigenous tourism operators.
- ✔ **Indigenous Inclusion**  
Offered by Indigenous Works, an Indigenous-led not-for-profit, this webinar focused on Indigenous histories, the impacts of colonization, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

## BUSINESS AND RECONCILIATION

### Call to Action 92:

*We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.*

### Actions:

- ✔ **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:**  
Trans Canada Trail office closed on September 30 to acknowledge the tragic legacy of former residential schools and colonization, and to allow staff to attend educational and commemorative events. This was the result of a corporate decision in 2022-2023 to cancel the Easter Monday holiday and instead to respect September 30.
- ✔ **Indigenous Advisory Committee:**  
Two meetings were held to collect members' perspectives and ideas on several Trans Canada Trail projects and initiatives, as they pertain to engagement and support of Indigenous communities.
- ✔ **Hiring:**  
Trans Canada Trail posted several job postings on the Aboriginal Job Board and Indigenous Works; however, we did not receive applications nor inquiries directly from these sites. We continue to investigate the best sites from which to promote positions among potential First Nation, Métis and Inuit candidates.



## MEDIA AND RECONCILIATION

### Calls to Action 84 (iii):

*Continuing to provide dedicated news coverage and online public information resources on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians, including the history and legacy of residential schools and the reconciliation process.*

### Actions:

- ✔ National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 2023):

Trans Canada Trail publicly recognized the past and present harm caused by colonization, and reaffirmed its commitment to reconciliation, and to developing meaningful, respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities. This news story also shared articles and videos about residential schools and Orange Shirt Day and promoted events across the country.

- ✔ Story on Indigenous Signage (June 2023):

Entitled *Wayfinding Along the Trail: Honouring Indigenous Languages through Signage*, this story shared examples of signage along the Trans Canada Trail that includes Indigenous languages.

- ✔ Trails Support Program for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Communities (January 2024):

This article is about the launch of Trans Canada Trail's first Trails Support Program for Indigenous communities. This program provides funding to First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities for trails in their communities. All First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities are eligible.

- ✔ Trail Training for Indigenous Youth (January 2024):

This news article and video is about Trans Canada Trail's training week in partnership with Outland Youth Employment Program. This five-day trail training, undertaken at seven camps across British-Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario, teaches Indigenous youth the basics of trail stewardship.

- ✔ Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation event profiled:

Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation partnered with the Crow Wing Trail Association to organize a Mother Earth Care Gathering. This event was profiled in an online story, and highlighted the events that took place, including botany education, mat making, truth-telling and music.







**TRANS CANADA TRAIL**  
**SENTIER TRANSCANADIEN** TM/MC



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