



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



# OUR COMMITMENT TO **INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION**

2022-2023 REPORT

PREPARED MARCH 2023

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# THANK YOU

**Thank you to the 2022-2023 members  
of the Indigenous Advisory Committee  
for your invaluable feedback, ideas and guidance:**

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**Emma Mohns, Committee Chair**

Kevin Eshkawkogan

Donald Hanson

Andrea Lafond

George Lafond

Candace Leffler

Richard Peter

Lois Phillips

Rob Thomas

Ramzey Zallum

“

Recognizing that every Canadian and every Canadian organization has a role to play in reconciliation, Trans Canada Trail has embedded a culture of recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples. The work continues every day in Trans Canada Trail's efforts to create a truly inclusive Trail and I am proud to be a part of the journey.

*– Emma Mohns, Trans Canada Trail Board Member  
and Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Committee*

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# 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.

“

The movement of people along natural trails and waterways has been a feature of this land since time immemorial. Today, this movement allows for the exchange of culture, the creation of friendships and the realization of extraordinary experiences. As stewards of the Trans Canada Trail we have a profound responsibility to ensure that those who use and sustain the Trail also advance reconciliation.

– Michael Lindsay, Chair, Trans Canada Trail Board

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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.

## TRANS CANADA TRAIL ACKNOWLEDGES THAT

**TRANS CANADA TRAIL**  
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Yus Fink, Margalit Heston, Cowichan Valley Trail  
Covers: Mike Tomlinson/Elle + Co. and Fern Samuels  
Photo Credit: Tishka Kaplan

**TRANS CANADA TRAIL**  
**COMMITMENT TO**  
**INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION**

MARCH 2023

- 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.

# 2022-2023 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, 2022, and March 31, 2023. The Trail projects, found under Language and Culture, Sport and Reconciliation, and Youth Programs, amount to a commitment of over \$800,000 towards projects that support Indigenous communities, share Indigenous stories, build capacity among Indigenous youth, and invest in Indigenous tourism destinations. Staff training is found under Professional Development and Training, and 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.



Curve Lake First Nation has named the Trail in Peterborough Gchi Mkinaak, meaning Big Turtle in Anishinaabemowin. These signs will be installed along the trail in spring 2023, after work was interrupted last year by a severe storm.

# LANGUAGE & 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

**Tom Snow Indigenous Historical Research (AB):** Bragg Creek Trails worked with Stoney Nakoda Nation to research the history of the naming of Tom Snow Trail and to provide historical background on the traditional uses of the land where the trail is located. As a result of this process, the trail has been renamed Chief Tom Snow Trail.

**Mi'kmaw Language Signage:** "Trans Canada Trail" was translated into Mi'kmaw by Kinu, an organization in Nova Scotia comprised of chiefs, parents and educators protecting Mi'kmaw language. This signage is being installed this year along the Atlantic View Trail and Gaetz Brook Greenway.

**Rosburn to RMNP Signage:** Interpretive signage was created along the trail in collaboration with Waywayseecappo First Nation.

“

As an employee at Trans Canada Trail I have the privilege of being part of the team that stewards Canada's national trail in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. For me, this starts with listening, then learning and acknowledging, and finally acting. The Trail itself provides us all with the opportunity to tell the stories of this land, respecting our shared histories and amplifying Indigenous stories and voices.

– Eleanor McMahon,  
President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail

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# The Speech Act



Photo credit: Brook Mollroy

A speech act occurs when a language is used not only to share information but also to carry out or trigger an action.

Winnipeg Trails Association and Urban Shaman Contemporary Aboriginal Art Gallery worked together to create The Speech Act along Winnipeg's section of the Trans Canada Trail. Created by architect Ryan Gorrie, a member of Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek, this interactive installation engages the public in local language varieties through art and story.



## ACTIONS UNDERWAY

**Fort Simpson Village Loop (NWT):** The northern community of Fort Simpson is developing a trailhead and three interpretive panels along the trail at key access points and cultural locations.

**ᖃᖅᐅ Pêmaska Trails (SK):** Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation is adding signage and trailheads along their 25 km of new trail (see page 11).

**Tuktoyaktuk (NWT):** The community of Tuktoyaktuk, Trans Canada Trail's Point Zero North, is developing interpretive signs in English, French and Inuvialuktun.

**DeCew House Heritage Park Improvements (2021 Signage):** Interpretive signage for the First Nations Peace Monument to be presented in Mohawk, English and French, and will include a land acknowledgement, peace monument interpretation and local First Nation history.

**Anishinaabemowin Signage (ON):** Curve Lake First Nation has named the Trail in Peterborough Gchi Mkinaak, meaning Big Turtle in Anishinaabemowin. Signs will be installed along the trail in spring 2023, after work was interrupted by a severe storm last spring.



### MI'KMAW TRAIL SIGNAGE

These wayfinders featuring the Trail name in the Mi'kmaw language are being installed by communities in Nova Scotia.

# SPORT & 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

**Station Uapishka:** This new trail, located in a UNESCO biosphere reserve, has been completed, with interpretive components being installed this year (see page 12).

**Skye River Trail Improvements (NS):** The We'koqma'q First Nation has completed improvements to optimize their water access point on the Bras d'Or Lake water route.

**Stories of Pawgwasheeng Medicine Trail:** Pays Plat First Nation has completed a 750-metre interpretive trail meant to feature traditional medicinal plant use.

**Ojibway Trail Nature Trail Expansion:** Garden River First Nation expanded and enhanced the Ojibway Park Nature Trail with new infrastructure and trail development.

**Trail Care Grants:** Twelve Trail Care Grants were granted to Indigenous communities to improve Trail sections, supporting the transition from one season to another.

“Hemingway, the American author, suggested writers need to ‘write the truest sentence you know’. In the short story ‘Big Two-Hearted River’, the truest sentence appears as ‘The river was there’. I ask those seeking to advance reconciliation, despite its difficulty, to walk the Trans Canada Trail. You will find there a river, a stand of trees, a paradise of flowers, and hopefully peace, truth and a way to reconciliation. In the spirit of our grandmothers and forefathers.

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

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## ACTIONS UNDERWAY

**Wagmatcook Trail Planning (NS):** Wagmatcook First Nation is planning a 2.7-km trail system through the community, providing the opportunity to participate in healthy recreation activities and learn about Wagmatcook's rich Indigenous culture.

**ᖃᖅᐅᐅ Pēmiska 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. The trail will extend from Duck Lake to Fort Carlton Provincial Park.

**Air Ronge Heritage Trail:** A study is underway to assess trail conditions and propose options to maximize the trail experience.

**DeCew House Heritage Park Improvements**

**Meeting Hub and Interpretive Signage Blue Highway**

**Wanuskewin Heritage Park Safety and Access Study:** The Wanuskewin Heritage Park is undertaking a study regarding the access to the Trail from the park, in consideration of safety, artifacts in the park and buffalo nearby.



Photo credit: Debbie King

**Pays Plat First Nation building the Stories of Pawgwasheeng Medicine Trail.**





Located in northern Quebec, Station Uapishka is a joint venture between Conseil des Innus de Pessamit and the Manicouagan-Uapishka World Biosphere Reserve. They have recently joined the Trans Canada Trail network and are in the process of completing a trail, complete with interpretive signs and lookouts with views of the Manicouagan reservoir and the Uapishka mountains.

*Photos credit: Vincent Bussi res.*





# 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

**Education Framework:** Trans Canada Trail has developed an education framework to provide youth facing barriers with introductory Trail Crew Training.

**Trail Week at OYEP:** Trans Canada Trail provided 167 youth in the Outland Youth Employment Program with a one-week introduction to trails. Trail Week was offered in eight camps across provinces, taught by several trail instructors including staff from Manitoba Parks.



Trail Week at OYEP takes place in northwestern Quebec for the first time in 2022.

“

Doing the Trans Canada Trail was such an amazing experience. Having the opportunity to see what it's like doing the trail first-hand was great! Using the brush saw and rakes, really getting your hands dirty, and seeing the progress you're making is such a rewarding feeling!

– Ricki Star, Trail Crew Training participant

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# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

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**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 - COMPLETED

**Between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023, several Trans Canada Trail staff participated in training opportunities related to Indigenous history, culture and reconciliation, and attended various workshops and events. These are:**

**4 Seasons of Reconciliation (First Nations University of Canada)**

A 10-module course on Truth and Reconciliation.

**Indigenous Canada (University of Alberta)**

Explores key issues facing Indigenous peoples today from a historical and critical perspective.

**KAIROS Blanket Exercise**

Hosted by The Athabasca Native Friendship Centre, the local library, and the local senior's society.

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

National Commemorative Gathering.

**Athabasca University Four Seasons Speaker Series**

Ovide Mercredi spoke on Indigenous self-determination.

**Ulnooweg Summer Solstice 10k Race**

A race in the Mi'kmaq community of Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia.

# BUSINESS & RECONCILIATION

**Calls 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 - COMPLETED

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:** Trans Canada Trail made a corporate decision to acknowledge the tragic legacy of former residential schools and colonization by closing annually on September 30 so staff can attend educational and commemorative events.

**Indigenous Advisory Committee:** A meeting was held in November 2022 to collect members' perspectives and ideas on Trail Crew Training for Indigenous youth and in Indigenous communities.

**Recruitment:** There is now Indigenous representation on both Trans Canada Trail's staff and Board of Directors.

“ As an Indigenous person working at Trans Canada Trail, one thing I really appreciate is our weekly land acknowledgements. Because we have employees located across Canada, we truly get to share in the Indigenous culture and land from coast to coast to coast. Each week we get to learn from one another, which is the point of doing land acknowledgements, to express our gratitude, respect and recognition to those who reside here, and to honour Indigenous peoples from different places across Turtle Island. For this I am grateful, Miigwetch.

– Sylvia St. George, Trans Canada Trail staff member

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## The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and Trans Canada Trail Announce New Partnership

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and Trans Canada Trail are pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU outlines the two organizations' commitment to work together and share resources, knowledge and expertise to improve, develop, support and promote tourism destinations inclusive of authentic Indigenous experiences and trail experiences for domestic as well as international guests.



*The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance joins Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail, and Keith Henry, President & CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, in celebration of an MOU, signed in Winnipeg, on March 13, 2023.*



# MEDIA & 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

**Commitment to Indigenous Reconciliation Webpage:** Trans Canada Trail created a new webpage dedicated to its Commitment to Indigenous Reconciliation.

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:** 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.

Trans Canada Trail shared several projects, events and initiatives by Indigenous groups on social media, such as [National Trails Day at Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation](#) and the [new public art piece](#) in Point Douglas, Winnipeg.



### CBC'S UNRESERVED

Trans Canada Trail reached out to media to highlight our Trail Crew Training for Indigenous youth, in partnership with Outland Youth Employment Program, and had a feature audio story on [CBC's Unreserved](#).

**With gratitude to the many  
communities, organizations and  
individuals with whom we walk on  
the path of truth and reconciliation.**



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