

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Historic Goat River Trail Reopened

After 30 years of neglect, one of the most historic trails in the Fraser Headwaters is being cleared for human use. Under the direction of the Fraser Headwaters Alliance, a conservation society based in the Robson Valley, volunteers have made major progress on a project to allow backpackers and equestrians an opportunity to traverse the width of the Cariboo Mountains.

The trail was originally cleared in 1886 by a crew that was working for John Bowron, the Gold Commissioner of the Cariboo. It connected Barkerville to McBride and was used as a major pack trail for horse traffic for years, until the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was completed between McBride and Prince George. "It was even surveyed by the government for development into a motor vehicle road in 1912," says Roy Howard, the Alliance coordinator. "The route has been examined two or three times since for use as a logging road, scenic road or snowmobile trail. We just want to re-establish the original pack trail."

Most of the trail is in the scenic, pristine wilderness of the upper Goat River (though soon to be developed due to a recent decision of the provincial government). "Those who want to see the trail and upper Goat River in a pure wild state had better hurry," says Howard. "Road development could start as early as this summer, but fall is more likely."

Old cabins, cache pits, mining evidence and one-hundred year old blazes can still be found along the trail. The trail is the only one that was actively used across the Cariboo Mountains, using the lowest pass in the range. It is believed to have a high probability of having been a pre-contact, First Nations' trade route through the mountains.

The group is committed to complete the trail project in 1999. Last year, 15 km out of total 32 km of trail between accesses was cleared of accumulated brush and deadfall. Sunday, the volunteer work began again for the new season, with the erection of a new sign for the trail head on the Goat River Forest Service Road, near McBride (see photos).

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