



## Salmon Arm Walking Program Links with Trail Project

October 2007



Salmon Arm's Active Community Initiative added a local twist to the Steps Out online activity tracker program. Salmon Arm walkers can watch their progress across a virtual map of a proposed trail loop around Shuswap Lake rather than virtually walking to farther destinations like Whistler or New York.

*"I thought it might be more meaningful for people to do something that was meaningful locally,"* said Donna Flatman, Shuswap Recreation Society's Program Coordinator, who leads Salmon Arm's Active Communities Initiative called Active Salmon Arm.

Active Salmon Arm partnered with a local organization, the Shuswap Hut & Trail Alliance, which is leading a community project to build a 330-kilometre trail system around the lake. The Alliance completed 30 kilometres of the Shuswap Trail in the summer of 2007, thanks to donations from the community.

The Active Salmon Arm Step Program kicked off in May 2007. Registration numbers jumped once the virtual map around Shuswap Lake was up and running at [www.activesalmonarm.ca](http://www.activesalmonarm.ca) in August.

*"We have people coming in and saying, 'Anything that helps motivate me to walk is good,' and they love the maps,"* Flatman said. *"I learned very quickly that the key to the success of the Step Program is to have the virtual walk."*

By October, 80 people had signed up for the Step Program. For \$20, participants get a pedometer, water bottle, access to local trail maps, log-in to the website steps tracker and information sessions on walking. A \$2,500 BCRPA Active Communities grant went towards buying the pedometers. Active Salmon Arm ordered the pedometers together with Vernon Recreation to receive a reduced bulk price. Salmon Arm was then awarded additional pedometers from the ActNow BC Activity Challenge pedometer program in 2007.

*"We've been having very positive feedback,"* Flatman said. *"They love the website; they love the virtual walk. And some people had never heard of the Hut to Hut initiative so they are really excited."*

The Shuswap Hut & Trail Alliance is connected to a larger initiative in the Interior promoting the development of five trail loops interconnected in a trail network with accommodations along the way (the Five Rings Trail). Pending all approvals, the Five Rings Trail would link the Similkameen and Boundary areas with the Okanagan, Shuswap, Thompson, and Monashee, and finish in the Columbia region near Revelstoke. Some sections throughout the proposed Five Rings Trail network already exist. The trail network is expected to attract local and international outdoor enthusiasts, bringing business opportunities to the local economies.

Active Salmon Arm aims to eventually develop virtual walks of all five rings. For further information on the proposed trails, visit [www.shuswaptrails.com/huttohut.htm](http://www.shuswaptrails.com/huttohut.htm) and [www.fiveringstrail.com](http://www.fiveringstrail.com).

### ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

Active Salmon Arm's website was developed through in-kind support from the community. The City of Salmon Arm's IT person provided existing area trail maps, and a man working on his doctorate in mapping created the virtual map of the proposed Shuswap Trail.

A Salmon Arm graphic designer who was participating in a neighbouring Steps Out program voluntarily built Salmon Arm's website. When the virtual map and member log-in portion of the website became an obstacle, Flatman then enlisted the help of a Grade 12 student. The student worked on the site as a graded project until the site's development reached beyond his abilities.

*"That's when I went to my supervisor here with the Shuswap Recreation Society and said, 'This is key, we're at roadblocks. I have exhausted the community for volunteer involvement. I need to hire somebody to move forward,'"* Flatman recalled. They then contracted a local web designer to finish the site for \$700.

*"It turns out he actually probably put in more volunteer hours than he did paid hours in the end,"* Flatman said. *"He said he thought the project was really amazing and he thoroughly enjoyed working on it."* She figures upwards of \$5,000 in time was donated by all the people involved.

*"I know some of the people really well that helped me out but then there were some people that I had never met before, and yet everybody was really keen on the project,"* Flatman said.

*"I know some of the people really well that helped me out but then there were some people that I had never met before, and yet everybody was really keen on the project,"*

- Flatman said.

- Built an Active Salmon Arm website: [www.activesalmonarm.ca](http://www.activesalmonarm.ca)
- Partnered with a local initiative to develop a destination trail network
- Received grants from UBCM (\$34,500), Social Planning Council Action Fund (\$4,500), BCRPA Active Communities (\$2,500), ProMotion Plus Girls only Incentive (\$2,500), BCRPA Baseline Activity Survey (\$5,000)
- Received pedometers from the ActNow BC Activity Challenge pedometer program in 2007
- Promoting the Passport to Activity program
- 21 registered Action! Schools in the North Okanagan-Shuswap School District
- All 6 Salmon Arm elementary schools participated in the Passport Program
- Organized Try It, You'll Like It with local businesses to offer free trials of facilities and programs
- Hosting 5 Walks/5 Weeks guided walking groups

## Salmon Arm Info

**Population:** 16,012 (in 2006)

- Numerous outdoor activities including trails for cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, mountain biking and hiking
- Indoor opportunities include the Sunwave Centre with a sports complex and twin ice arenas, and a recreation centre with a swimming pool
- Shuswap Lake is one of the most popular recreational destinations in BC
- Main industries are forestry, agriculture, tourism, commerce and manufacturing
- Salmon Arm boasts a mild four-season climate and plenty of waterways, green space and provincial parks

(Sources: [www.salmonarm.ca](http://www.salmonarm.ca), [www.sachamber.bc.ca](http://www.sachamber.bc.ca), [www.salmonarmedc.com](http://www.salmonarmedc.com))

### GET ACTIVE PASSPORT

Alongside the Step Program, Active Salmon Arm is promoting the Get Active Passport Program. Participants record their activities in passports to enter for a chance to win prizes. The two-phased program, funded through a \$34,500 Union of BC Municipalities Community Health Promotion Fund grant, ran from April to June 2007 in the elementary schools and September to November in the community.

Active Salmon Arm hired David Knight to coordinate the program. Without dedicated PE teacher positions in elementary schools, the teachers embraced Knight's suggestions for PE class activities and opportunities for students to fill in their passports.

*"For me to come in with a recreation background to suggest five or six games to them, they were really appreciative of it,"* Knight said.

The reluctance of one school's teachers to get involved with the program because of the additional work it could create was alleviated once they recognized the support and suggestions Knight provided.

*"I offered to come in and do after-school programs and lunch-hour programs for them and they jumped on it and had me in as many days as they could,"* he said. *"For them, it was a great bonus."*

Each school that participated received a gift certificate for a school sports supplier to purchase equipment for the school for the upcoming year. Active Salmon Arm also bought about \$1,000 worth of athletic equipment to provide incentive prizes to the students.



*"The students are walking extra laps around the halls and school grounds to increase their steps,"*

- Donna Flatman

*"Sometimes just to give them that prize was enough to light them up for a day and get them excited and keep them going,"* he observed. *"Walking into the classroom and handing them a new Nerf football or soccer ball—they were thrilled. Every time I came back to the school they always wanted to show me they had it with them and they were playing with it."*

More than 800 elementary students participated in the program across three schools, for an average of 88 minutes per week of structured activity during school time. Many of the schools are also registered with Action Schools! BC and have been doing morning dance warm-ups and afternoon stretches.

In fall 2007, two classes (60 students) were given pedometers and passwords to the Active Salmon Arm Step Program's virtual walk, logging their progress each week.

*"The students are walking extra laps around the halls and school grounds to increase their steps,"* Flatman said. In conjunction with the Get Active Passport Program in the community this fall, Active Salmon Arm also approached local businesses to offer Try it, you'll like it opportunities for people to try a facility or program for free.

*"We had one couple come in with their kids saying that the one time they could try ice-skating was during our free skate day,"* Knight said. *"It was the first time they had ever been ice-skating and the kids enjoyed it thoroughly. Now they want to come and do it more, whereas before they really hadn't noticed it or known about it."*

Knight has observed the Step and Passport programs leading to an increase in physical activity.

*"It's definitely having a greater impact on the community,"* he said. When Active Salmon Arm first started its free 5 Walks/5 Weeks group walks in September, only a few people showed up, but by October more than 15 people were attending.

### Armstrong/Spallumcheen Discovers its Routes

January 2008

Hardware store employees, mayor and council, and a radio personality in Armstrong and Spallumcheen have jumped on the bandwagon to join a virtual trek along the route travelled by the area's early European settlers.

Armstrong/Spallumcheen's Active Communities committee is bringing local history into its version of the Steps Out online activity tracker program. The website ([www.overlanderwalkthewalk.com](http://www.overlanderwalkthewalk.com)) tells the story of Catherine O'Hare Schubert – the first European woman to enter British Columbia overland from eastern Canada in 1862 during the gold rush, before eventually settling in Spallumcheen (the area between Vernon and Enderby). While pregnant, she travelled with her three children, her husband and more than a hundred men by foot, Red River cart, river raft and horseback from Fort Garry (now Winnipeg).

Tara Shantz, who leads the Armstrong/Spallumcheen Active Communities committee of 20-plus partners, heard about Steps Out from neighbouring communities at the BC Recreation and Parks Association's Active Communities regional roundtable in Summerland in October 2007. Now, groups and individuals are clipping on their pedometers, walking around town and challenging each other, tracking their steps across the online map in memory of the Schuberts.

*"A lot of people around here know about [Catherine],"* Shantz said. And her descendants, including her great-great-granddaughter are still living in Armstrong.

This summer, participants in the walking program will join the Schubert family reunion at a community picnic in the park (where there is a monument to Catherine) to celebrate their progress along the route and remember their heritage.



Nearly 250 people had registered for the Steps Out program by mid-January. Among them are workplaces and other groups who have been staying motivated by tracking their collective progress across the map. Shantz says this impressive group includes 18 individuals who had logged over a million steps each.

*"It's been very good for the workplace,"* Shantz noted. *"Business owners have said to me that it's really boosted morale, and people are looking at their pedometers and seeing who's got the most [steps] every day. And Sandy Melvin who owns Shepherd's [Hardware] gets on the PA in the morning before they open up and says, 'Have you logged in, have you got your steps.'"*

- Launched a Steps Out website with a historical map
- Workplace walking groups logging steps on the website
- Grants from BCRPA through Active Communities (\$5,000 & \$300)
- Hosting active events: "Lets Get Physical" Dance and Dance Marathon, Great Pumpkin Relay, First Night
- Awarded pedometers through ActNow BC Activity Challenge in 2007
- Active Communities committee with 20-plus community partners
- Gained support from both mayors and councils
- Hosting Communities in Bloom walk tours
- Swapping sporting equipment

**Populations:** 4,526 Armstrong; 5,707 Spallumcheen (BC Stats 2005)

- Strong agricultural roots
- Armstrong hosts the Interior Provincial Exhibition and Stampede
- The name Spallumcheen, meaning beautiful valley, derives from the Splots'in First Nation
- Facilities include a skateboard park, ice arena, playing fields, outdoor pool, hiking & biking trails, golf course

(Sources: [www.cityofarmstrong.bc.ca](http://www.cityofarmstrong.bc.ca), [www.spallumcheentwp.bc.ca](http://www.spallumcheentwp.bc.ca), [www.hellobc.com](http://www.hellobc.com))