



Active Campbell River's Squad off to a Flying Start

March 2008



Active Campbell River's team of partners is making it easier for Campbell River residents to get started and to stay active.

A first-of-its-kind guide mapping walking routes in the Campbell River area will be coming out this spring. Residents can get free copies of the guide by pulling it out of the local newspaper, downloading it from the City and Strathcona Regional District websites, or picking it up at community centres, workplaces, health care centres and other public places. The guide targets both the inactive with its shorter walks of less than 3 kilometres and the already-active with its lesser-known routes to add variety to routines. And many of the routes are accessible.

"They're accessible to almost everybody — if they're in a wheelchair or they have

a baby stroller or they have mobility issues," said Meghan Best, Recreation Programmer for the City of Campbell River Parks, Recreation and Culture, and Active Community Team Leader. *"And we've chosen different neighbourhoods around town."*

Active Campbell River is putting together the *12 Great Places to Walk in Campbell River and Area* guide with the help of a \$5,000 grant from the BC Recreation and Parks Association through Active Communities. The need for a guide containing maps of all the local trails to support active lifestyles was brought to light in the City's Strategic Parks Plan and in the Active Campbell River Active Community plan.

To develop its Active Community plan, Active Campbell River put on a strate-

gic planning workshop in 2007 to bring together community leaders in the region and consult the public. The workshop also strengthened the Active Campbell River team. Organizers and attendees represented the City, the Comox Strathcona Regional District, North Island College, School District 72, Vancouver Island Health Authority, BC Cancer Agency, and Success by 6, among other organizations.

"Through that we got a lot of really great information which is how we made up our entire plan," Best said. *"We got a pretty broad range of people who could speak to what they think the direction should be, at least for the first year or two."* The team developed the initiatives in its plan using the themes in the BCRPA Active Communities Workbook: getting started; raising public awareness; developing opportunities; supportive environments; plans and policies; partnerships; and monitoring progress.

"We've tied in very closely and we've worked with all the documentation from Active Communities to produce a plan that will target all ages and all stages," said Sandra Milligan, Active Campbell River Committee Chair and an instructor at North Island College.

To develop the *12 Great Places to Walk in Campbell River and Area* guide, a committee member from the Regional District's Recreation department, Susan Bullock, prepared the maps to give them a consistent look. Active Campbell River hopes to eventually partner with the tourism sector to make the publication more sustainable by opening it up to sport and recreation advertisers.

Vancouver Island – Campbell River

Another shortcoming highlighted in the strategic planning workshop was the lack of trail signage. To further promote getting out on trails this summer, a popular forested area called the Beaver Lodge Lands will get much-needed signs directing walkers, runners and horse-back riders through trail intersections.

“It’s a wonderful place to walk, but once you’re in the forest, only trail name signs are present. Information about trail length and destination is lacking,” Milligan said. *“We met many people who didn’t walk there at all because they were afraid of getting lost.”*

Active Campbell River is partnering on the project with the Discovery Coast Greenways Land Trust, which oversees the maintenance of the Beaver Lodge Lands. The lands stretch 415 hectares and branch into many residential neighbourhoods. Another grant of \$3,290 from BCRPA through Active Communities is funding the signage project.

Walking is the most popular physical activity in the Campbell River area, according to a 2006 Ipsos-Reid poll (preferred by 52% of respondents). The Comox Strathcona Regional District was awarded pedometers through ActNow BC’s online Activity Challenge pedometer grants program.

Many of those pedometers have been given to a chronic disease management program to help improve the quality of life for those with diabetes and heart disease. Active Campbell River has partnered with physicians, physiotherapists and chiropractors to hand out pedometers and information pamphlets to patients on the benefits of walking, plus tips to get started.

“We’re trying to get to the people who would not typically pick up a recreation guide at all,” Milligan noted. *“If a physician tells someone that they need to exercise, then they are more likely to listen to their doctor.”* The team will



work with the physicians to establish how to measure the impact the pedometer program is having on the patients.

Before receiving the ActNow pedometers, Milligan started up a pedometer challenge to get faculty and staff of North Island College out walking. The Human Resources department covered the costs of the pedometers and 40 faculty and staff signed up for the six-week program.

“For many of them, they really didn’t have any sort of planned activity in their lives and this gave them a baseline and it also encouraged them,” Milligan observed. *“So they started parking further away in the parking lot and they tell me they did the same when they went shopping. It created a support network where people could talk about their activities with co-workers. It really opened the window for a lot of co-workers who didn’t previously communicate much with each other to start talking and walking together.”*

Other workplaces around the region have been introduced to active workplace tips and health breaks through the Flying Fitness Squad. The squad of fitness and recreation leaders (from the City and Regional District) put on Active Campbell River capes and ran around to work-

Active Campbell River Highlights

- Flying Fitness Squads during Winteractive and Spirit of BC Week got employees active
- Planning Just Try It activities for Move for Health Day on May 10
- 6-week pedometer program for 40 faculty and staff at North Island College
- Held community consultation workshop to develop Active Campbell River plan
- Evaluating progress using the BCRPA TRACE (Tools and Resources for Active Communities Evaluation) Tool kit
- Giving pedometers granted from ActNow BC to physicians to distribute to patients, along with an information flyer on getting started
- Received grants from BCRPA through Active Communities (\$3,290 and \$5,000) for trail signs in Beaver Lodge lands and a 12 Great Places to Walk in Campbell River and Area mapping guide; BCRPA Active Communities Active Event grant for Spirit of BC Week for free swim and skate (\$300); and Union of BC Municipalities Community Health Promotion Fund (\$35,000)
- Producing Active Campbell River newsletters
- Local newspaper reports on Active Campbell River plan and initiatives
- Multi-sectoral committee
- Advocating for improved access to the seawalk
- 14 schools registered with Action Schools! BC in School District 72



places and schools during WinterActive and Spirit of BC Week the past two years. Once there, they got employees and students taking 15-minute activity breaks. In 2007, two squads visited about 20 schools and businesses, including City Hall. The Squad not only showed people how to incorporate exercise into their day but also heightened awareness of Campbell River's Active Communities initiative.

"It really does a lot for getting workplaces to think about active lifestyles and to realize there are supports out there to help them if they decide to start having a more active lifestyle," Milligan noted.

The squad also makes special appearances throughout the year, like at Move for Health Day events on May 10. This year's Move for Health Day will introduce participants to new activities, such as belly dancing and disc golf, at a Just Try It event at the Sportsplex and Willow Point Park. In addition, the Greenways Gallop walk/run participants travel five kilometres through the Beaver Lodge Lands in the morning.

"People can come and try an activity and see if they like it and also find out more about what's happening out there," Best said.

"We're trying to get to the people who would not typically pick up a recreation guide at all,"

- Sandra Milligan

Active Campbell River heard about other Active Communities doing free trial events through success stories shared on BCRPA's Active Communities website, and decided to try the same.

"When we want to start a new program or get an idea for an event, [the website] is a great resource to see what other communities are doing," Milligan noted.

To keep these projects going, Active Campbell River will be hiring a part-time coordinator in 2008, thanks to a \$35,000 grant from the Union of BC Municipalities Community Health Promotion Fund.

"To date, a lot of our activities are on the side of our desk or pretty much volunteer," Milligan noted. *"We're doing it over and above our regular jobs, so being able to hire someone is going to be a huge asset to getting some of these things done."*

To evaluate their progress, Active Campbell River team members went to an Active Communities TRACE Tool kit workshop (Tools and Resources for Active Communities Evaluation) put on by BCRPA earlier this year. The team plans to use TRACE this summer, then update their plan in the fall based on the findings coming out of applying TRACE to their programs and campaigns.

"We present to council every year to give them an update on our activities," Milligan said. *"They have always been very supportive."*

Population: 30,810 (BC Stats 2005)

- Located on Discovery Passage on north-east coast of Vancouver Island
- Ipsos Reid poll reports 70% of Campbell River residents lead moderately active lifestyles
- Facilities include a Sportsplex, Community Centre, Centennial Pool, Discovery Pier, and Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex with two indoor pools, water slides, weight-room, sauna, steam-room, two ice arenas, leisure skating ice
- City manages 26 parks with amenities including ball diamonds, beach access, paved walkways, playgrounds, sporting fields, tennis courts, and trails
- Strathcona Regional District manages 15 parks
- Downhill and cross-country skiing on Mount Washington
- Dubbed "Salmon Capital of the World"
- Strathcona Provincial Park has opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, swimming, canoeing and kayaking
- Eco-tourism, forestry, mining, fishing, aquaculture are the main industries
- Home to the Kwikwaka'wakw First Nation

www.campbellriver.ca,
www.strathconard.ca,
www.campbellriverchamber.ca,
www.aboriginalcanada.com