

Interpretive Plan Report



for

The Fort-to-Fort Trail

EcoLeaders



Interpretation
and
Environmental
Education

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2003
submitted to
Township of Langley
Parks and Recreation 4700
224th Street
Langley, B.C.
V2Z 1N4

EcoLeaders Nature Interpretation
Box D82
Bowen Island, B.C.
V0N 1G0
Phone: (604) 947-0483
Fax: (604) 947-0442
email: whusby@shaw.ca

Executive Summary

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is a 4.6 kilometre linear trail connecting the Fort Langley National Historic Site with the site of the original Fort Langley in Derby Reach Regional Park. Most of the trail parallels the south shore of the Fraser River, although there are some sections that pass through the town of Fort Langley or follow rural roads.

The main section of the trail was completed in September 2001 with a temporary section running along the edge parcel of property on the edge of the village of Fort Langley Interfor. When the Interfor property is developed, the final section of the Fort-to-Fort Trail will be built along Fraser River.

The Township of Langley Parks and Recreation Department contracted EcoLeaders Interpretation and Environmental Education to develop an interpretive plan for the trail and design 12-15 interpretive signs for the Fort-to-Fort Trail. This report is the interpretive plan and corresponding sign plan for the trail.

Interpretive Plan

The Interpretive Plan documents and analyzes what is known about the people who visit the park – how many come, when, how often they visit, how long they stay, why they come, and what they are interested in. The plan presents an inventory, itemizes and maps of the features along the trail. These features were interpreted, and analyzed in terms of interpretive value and risk of resource damage by visitors. Finally, a series of interpretive themes is identified that can be used by interpreters to develop programs that bring park visitors and park resources together.

Visitors

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is used steadily throughout the year. Most users are local people who return to the trail often, sometimes bringing first-time visitors with them (neighbours, out of town friends and relatives etc.). Most appear to access the trail from their homes along the trail or drive to Derby Reach Regional Park where they access the trail from a parking lot located next to an historical interpretive node that features the Houston House and the Karr/Mercer historic barn.

Other user groups include visitors to Fort Langley National Historic Site and tourist visiting the shops and museums in the village of Fort Langley.

The high proportion of repeat users of the trail indicate that interpretation needs to focus on developing observation skills of trail users throughout the year. This will ensure that the interpretive signs will continue to be relevant to repeat users.

Associated Facilities

The Fort-to-Fort Trail has the unusual benefit of being associated with other interpretive facilities and programs in the Fort Langley Area. These include:

- Fort Langley National Historic Site
- Langley Centennial Museum
- Derby Reach Regional Park
- Brae Island Regional Park
- Langley CN Station Museum
- BC Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum

Site Inventory: What is There to Interpret?

A site inventory was conducted to identify issues and resources that may be interpreted. These resources consist of:

Human History/Cultural Features

- Prehistory
- First Nations
- First European Contact
- First European Settlement
- The Fraser Gold Rush
- Recent Developments

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Natural History Features

Natural Communities

- Fraser River
- Disturbance Zone
- Farmland
- Pond
- River Islands
- The Salmon River
- Old Field
- Riverside (Riparian) Vegetation
- Industrial Site
- Mixed Forest
- Derby Bluffs

Key Processes And Seasonal Events

Three key natural processes and seasonal events take place along the Fort-to-Fort Trail. Key points about these features are briefly summarized below:

- High Water
- Seasonal Blooms
- Migrations of fish and birds

Viewscapes

The Fort-to-Fort Trail offers several breath taking viewscapes that must be considered as features for the interpretive subjects. They include:

- The Fraser River
- Mount Baker
- Golden Ears

Resource/Visitor Management Concerns

Interpretation can be a powerful management tool. Visitors are much more willing to comply with regulations when they understand the need for them and the effects of non-compliance. Although pointing out the minor importance of the concerns, Langley Township and GVRD Parks staff have identified the following management issues related to the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

- Dogs Off Leash
- General Trail Etiquette
- Inappropriate Parking
- Stay on Trails

Interpretive Topics and Themes

Based on the research conducted, the following interpretive themes were developed:

Reading The Landscape

By observing and using the five senses, anyone can learn how the landscape was formed and how and why the natural communities along the Fort-to-Fort Trail reflect the area's physical conditions.

Tools For Observing

Using some simple observational techniques, anyone can increase their awareness, appreciation and understanding of the world of the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

The Importance of Water

The region's climate results in a dramatic seasonal changes in river levels that has a profound effect on the natural and human communities along the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

A Sense of Place

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is a comfortable place where people come repeatedly to recreate and enjoy the peace and beauty of this rare landscape.

A Land Steeped in History

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is located in one of BC's historic areas. People have been living here at least since the last ice age, making use of the land's abundant natural resources. There are many opportunities to learn about Fort Langley's rich past.

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Site Selection

The following sites for interpretive signs were selected:

Trail Heads

- Fort Langley National Historic Site
- CN Station*
- Derby Reach Regional Park

Interpretive Nodes

- Sources of Information
- Upland Forest
- Pond
- Salmon River Pumping Station (3 signs)
- Flood Plain Forest
- The Big River (2 signs)

Sign Design Options

Two sign design options were considered.

Standard Panel Design

A simple panel design is recommended. Each panel will be 28 inches wide by 15 inches high supported by one or two posts except at existing viewing platforms.

At all locations signs will be tilted at a 45 degree angle. Detailed drawings are included.

Book Design

A book design consisting of moveable 10 X 14 inches panels may be used at some sites.

Sign Media

The Scotch Print process is recommended. It is durable, affordable and can be produced locally. Alternative processes such as Folia and Duratec are also in common use.

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Introduction

Who Is This Interpretive Plan For?

This plan is aimed at Township of Langley planners who develop services and facilities featuring the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

What Is In This Plan?

Part 1: the Fort-to-Fort Trail General Interpretive Plan contains background including:

- information on the people who use the trail
- information on resources of the Fort-to-Fort Trail
- an analysis of site visitors and resources
- suggested interpretive themes for the Fort-to-Fort Trail

Part 2: Interpretive Signs contains details ideas for the development of an interpretive sign system for the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The plan consists of ideas and recommendations for:

- storylines that join the signs together
- interpretive themes
- communication objectives for trail signs
- main points for each sign
- trail design
- design of interpretive nodes
- location of interpretive nodes
- design of signs
- graphic design of sign panels
- funding and maintenance

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How Can This Interpretive Plan Be Used?

The process of awareness, appreciation and understanding among trail users will be facilitated by this interpretive plan. This document can be used to develop interpretive trail signs—its primary function— and also develop other interpretive programs such as guided hikes, roving naturalists, interpretive stations along the trail, and presentations at the adjacent facilities like Fort Langley National Heritage Site and Derby Reach Regional Park. The main function will be to assist in the enhancement of visitor experiences when they visit the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Interpretive planning is an on-going process. As time passes, new information and trends develop in visitation, and more information on the nature and history of the site becomes available. It is hoped that this interpretive plan will be a working document where interpreters and planners can add new information as it becomes available.

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Interpretive Plan

Philosophical Foundations

Interpretation: What is it?

Freeman Tilden, the godfather of interpretation in North America, defines interpretation as:

“... an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than to simply communicate factual information.” (Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage. 1957)

Here, Tilden has identified the key points that we follow in interpretation:

- interpretation reveals meaning
- interpretation requires people to interact with real objects, historic sites and landscapes, plants, animals and habitats
- interpretation is more than the simple communication of facts

Key Implication of this Definition

The Fort-to-Fort signs must relate to the people that visit the trail in a direct manner and address things that they can see, feel, touch, and smell on the very spot that the sign is located. The interpretation must be designed to provoke them to observe and think about the environment that they are encountering. Therefore, the selection of sites and placement of signs is a crucial part of this interpretive plan.

Interpretation will concentrate on natural and cultural history features that visitors will encounter or observe along the trail. The messages will also include, when practical, regional context as well as prehistory themes.

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Part 1

Fort-to-Fort Trail Interpretive Plan

Goals of the Interpretive Plan

1. Integrate interpretation on the Fort-to-Fort Trail with the interpretive services provided by:
 - the Fort Langley National Historic Site, located at the eastern terminus of the trail
 - Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Parks–East Area at Derby Reach Regional Park, located at the western terminus of the trail
 - the Langley Centennial Museum located in the village of Fort Langley
 - other heritage tourism facilities in Fort Langley including the CN Train Station and the Langley Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum
2. Identify and analyze
 - the visitors using the site in the past and trends for the future
 - the site resources available for interpretation
3. Using the information gathered, develop a suite of interpretive themes and messages about the natural and cultural heritage of the Fort-to-Fort Trail.
4. Develop a series of interpretive signs located along the Fort-to-Fort Trail that create awareness, appreciation and understanding among users of the trail.

Overall Objectives of the Interpretive Signs

After interacting with the interpretive signs along the Fort-to-Fort Trail the visitors will:

- learn and develop skills that will assist in increasing their enjoyment and understanding of local natural and cultural history
- wish to return to the trail to continue their observation and learning about the area's natural and cultural heritage
- be aware of and make use of local cultural history service providers
- follow general trail etiquette and resource management guidelines

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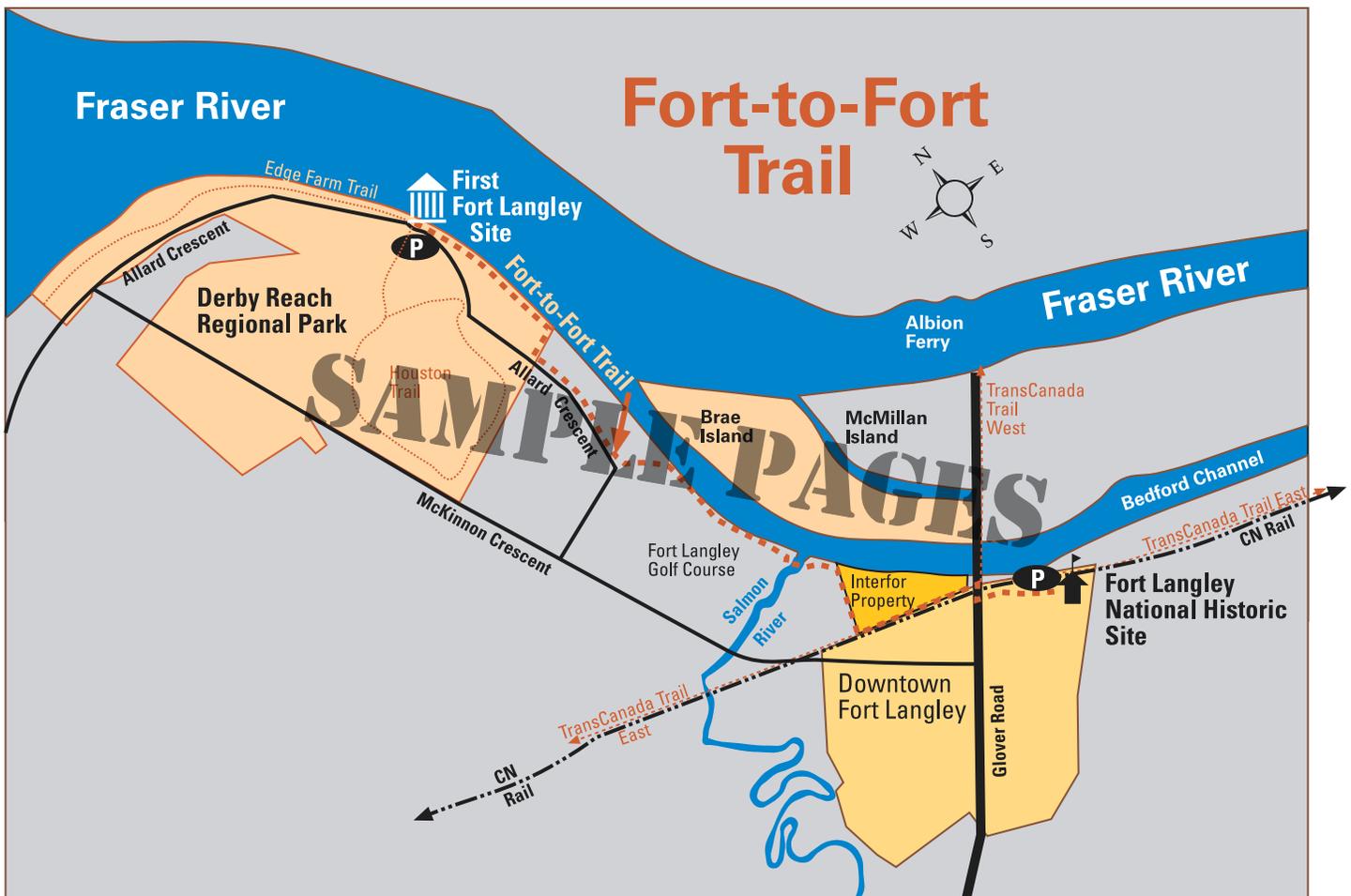
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The Study Area

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is a 4.6 kilometre linear trail connecting the Fort Langley National Historic Site with the site of the original Fort Langley in Derby Reach Regional Park. Most of the trail parallels the south shore of the Fraser River, although there are some sections that pass through the town of Fort Langley or follow rural roads.

The Fort-to-Fort Trail was completed in September 2001.

This interpretive plan covers only the lands that the Fort-to-Fort Trail passes through. However, for context, aspects of Derby Reach Regional Park, Fort Langley National Historic Site and other heritage preservation institutions in the village of Fort Langley are referred to as well.



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Section 1

Visitor Analysis: *Who Is This Trail For?*

Introduction

For an interpretive trail, it is vital to know who the users are and to identify their needs and interests. A visitor analysis identifies:

- Who will use interpretive products?
- What are they doing while on the trail?
- What are their interests?
- How often do they use the trail?

Methods

It has not been possible to conduct an extensive formal study because of budget and time constraints. Existing information on current and potential trail users was gathered from:

- the Fort Langley National Historic Site's Management Plan (1995)
- Fort Langley National Historic Site 1998 Visitor Survey
- personal communication with Bryan Jackson, Manager Heritage Programs, Fort Langley National Historic Site
- personal communication with Craig Smith, Operations Manager at Derby Reach Regional Park, and Rob Keip, Visitor Services Coordinator, GVRD Parks–East Area
- the Village of Fort Langley Heritage Tourism Study, published in 2002 by the Langley Centennial Museum
- informal observation of trail users on a single week day and on one day on a weekend

Note that almost all of the information used here is from sources outside the Fort-to-Fort Trail. Information was in two forms; anecdotal and formal.

Anecdotal information was gathered through talks with Township of Langley, GVRD Parks and Fort Langley NHS field staff. Formal information was gathered from reports on visitor characteristics that use scientifically rigorous methods and provided accurate information.

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Results

Applying Information from Other Sources to the Fort-to-Fort Trail

There were significant differences between the information about visitors to Fort Langley NHS, the Village of Fort Langley and Derby Reach Regional Park.

Key Differences	Fort Langley NHS	Fort Langley Village	Derby Reach Regional Park
Percent Return Visitors	Low	High	Very High
Where They Come From			
Outside BC	High (51%)	Low	Low
Lower Mainland	Medium (27%)	Medium	Low/medium
Local	Low	High	High
Education Levels	High	Unknown	Medium/high

Applying This Information to the Fort-to-Fort Trail

Visitor information from Derby Reach Regional Park was assessed as most useful for two reasons. The first is similar activities—users of the park facilities are in the park to walk, run, cycle and enjoy nature, as one would expect users of the Fort-to-Fort Trail to be.

The second reason is that at present and for long into the future, more Fort-to-Fort Trail users can be expected to originate from the Derby Reach end of the trail because of ease of access and because there are fewer distractions to draw people away from the trail.

Ease of Access

- the Derby Reach trails are connected to the Fort-to-Fort Trail and users are more likely to simply continue onto the Fort-to-Fort Trail from the park trails
- there is a parking lot adjacent to the Derby Reach trail head
- the trail head at Fort Langley NHS is not easily seen by visitors entering or leaving the Visitor Centre
- Most visitors to the Fort will not know of the existence of the Fort-to-Fort Trail and will not be prepared for a fairly long walk—it is not the focus of their visit

Fewer Distractions

- The village of Fort Langley has several other heritage tourism attractions e.g., the Centennial Museum, and there are numerous attractive shops and restaurants. A high proportion of Fort visitors will be drawn to these attractions rather than to the trail

Visual Appeal of the Trail

- the trail head area at Derby Reach is clear and appealing, and it will draw visitors down the trail
- the trail head area and eastern section of the trail at the Fort Langley end is not clear and the section through the Interfor property is visually unappealing (it will be several years before the Interfor property is redeveloped and the trail shifted to a more scenic route)

It must be noted that Fort Langley National Historic Site is planning to focus on attracting local repeat visitors, particularly families. This may include encouraging visitors to take a trip down the Fort-to-Fort Trail. If this is successful, we would expect to see more local families accessing the trail from the Fort parking lot.

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Also, the village of Fort Langley is planning to encourage their visitors to use Fort-to-Fort Trail as a means of prolonging their stay in the area. To this end, we will include some general recommendations as to trail heads.

1. Who Uses The Fort-To-Fort Trail?

The following list of users is based on our research:

- adults (ages 25-60)—single and small groups (1-5)
- parents with children, often with at least one child in a stroller
- extended families, often including children, parents and grandparents
- senior's walking groups
- seniors—individuals and small groups
- pre-teens—single and small groups (1-5)

Of the groups identified here, adults and parents with children are expected to be the heaviest users of the trail. At present, there is not enough information to rank the other user groups use the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

2. What Do They Do?

Most of the information about current activities comes from personal communication with GVRD park staff. The following is a listing in order of levels of use:

- Walk
- Walk Dogs
- Run
- Ride Bicycles
- Fishing

Sport fishing is a small but significant activity. In the past it was one of the main activities at Derby Reach Regional Park, however it is now much reduced with hiking and cycling being the park's main activities. A small number of fishers do access the Fraser from the Fort-to-Fort Trail this is of some concern with regard to bank erosion and fisher safety

- Enjoying Nature
bird watching, talking with friends in a natural setting, looking at scenery are expected to be important as well (see Why Do They Come? below)

3. Return Users/New Visitors?

A large portion of the present and potential visitors are local people who return often. Many use the trails as part of their daily routines, e.g., walk the dog at least once a day, and walk, run, or cycle the trail several times per week as part of an exercise routine. Others come several times a year or more often as part of a family cycling outing.

The *Village of Fort Langley Heritage Tourism Report* indicates that a large proportion of town site visitors return often. This is a large group of potential trail users.

4. How Long Do They Stay?

We estimate that the average trail user stays on the trail for one and one-half to four hours.

5. Where Do They Come From?

The majority of trail users are neighbours who live near the trail. They come from

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from:

- Fort Langley
- Walnut Grove
- Forest Hills
- Redwood

Weekends often see a small number of users from further afield in the greater Vancouver region. There are also small numbers of visitors from outside the region.

6. Why Do They Come?

Township of Langley and GVRD Parks staff suggest that the reasons visitors come to the park are to:

- exercise
- exercise their dogs
- enjoy the natural setting of the trail
- study nature

7. Do They Know Much About the Site?

Visitor knowledge about the natural and cultural history of the area varies greatly. While some know very little, others are likely to be keen naturalists and local historians.

8. Other Details About Visitor Groups

Age Ranges

Park staff indicate that the range of ages for visitors is very broad, from newborns to grandparents and great-grandparents.

Gender

In most groups the genders are fairly equally balanced. However, some groups may show a weekly trend. For example, families on weekdays during office hours consist mostly of women (mothers or care givers) with children. On weekends and evenings, families are most likely to consist of children and two adults.

Ethnic Background

Most visitors are Euro-Canadians. This reflects the general make up of the communities near the trail.

Socio-economic Status

There is no detailed information on the socio-economic status of of visitors. However, the local communities and subdivisions are mostly middle income.

Education

There is no information on the education levels of visitors.

9. Who Does Not Use The Fort-to-Fort Trail?

Teens are the largest and most conspicuously absent group on the Fort-to-Fort Trail. This may change when the Interfor property is developed as a residential area. Teens may use the trail as a means to get to downtown Fort Langley, and to travel to and from school.

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10. Visitation Numbers

How Many People Use The Fort-to-Fort Trail?

There are no direct statistics on use of the Fort-to-Fort Trail. However, several indirect sources of information exist. These are the visitation stats from Fort Langley National Historic Site and Derby Reach Regional Park.

Derby Reach has an annual visitation of 325,000 people. And Fort Langley NHS has approximately 72,000 visitors each year.

Derby Reach hiking trails link directly with the Fort-to-Fort Trail. Many of the park visitors are likely to continue their hike or cycle trip along the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

We expect that a significantly smaller portion of Fort Langley NHS visitors use the trail for reasons already given above.

The numbers of Fort Langley NHS visitors using the trail could be greatly increased if the Fort-to-Fort Trailhead was sited and presented more conspicuously.

When Do People Use the Trail?

Daily Use

Dog Walkers

The majority of dog walkers are active mornings (8–11 AM) and evenings (4 PM–nightfall) on week days.

Joggers

Joggers are most active before working hours (6–8AM) and again in the evening.

Walkers

Walkers are active throughout the day.

Weekly Use

Generally, trail use increases on weekends and holidays. Cycling and walking especially increase on sunny weekends.

Seasonal Use

Although no trail count data is available, it is likely that the trail is well used throughout the year with the highest use in the summer. GVRD Park staff indicate that the parking lot at the trailhead in Derby Reach Regional Park can be full on summer weekends and that during special events at the park, the lot is overflowing and cars are parked all along Allard Crescent.

Year to Year Use

The use of trail is likely to increase greatly over the next few years for the following reasons:

- The bedroom communities in nearby Walnut Grove, Forest Hills, and Redwoods are growing quickly
- In Fort Langley, the Interfor property adjacent to the trail will be developed into a residential subdivision in the near future.
- The merchants of Fort Langley are working to increase visitation to the village by promoting the trail as well as the many nearby heritage tourism facilities
- The Fort Langley National Historic Site is planning to promote the trail as part of the Fort experience

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Analysis of Audience Information

The use to the Fort-to-Fort Trail seems to be spread throughout the year. Peaks occur in the summer and are especially high during special events held at Derby Reach Regional Park and Fort Langley National Historic Site.

The majority of users come from nearby and a large proportion are return users, many of whom, such as joggers and dog walkers, return often.

It is likely that many are well educated and that many will have some basic knowledge about the area's history and natural history.

Primary Audience

The main audience for interacting with these interpretive signs will be local residents who use the trail as a regular recreation area.

Trail Users

- Adults
 - Recreators
 - taking a stroll or bicycle for exercise and enjoyment
 - taking dog for a walk
 - taking visiting friends and family for a stroll to show off the landscape and community
- Family Groups
 - Weekdays
 - parent(s) and preschoolers on an outing
 - usually walking
 - Weekends and Holidays
 - at least one parent with one or more child
 - activities include cycling, wildlife watching and enjoying views
- Teens and Pre-teens
 - usually in small groups of friends
 - on way to village or to visit friends

Background of Trail Users

The people using the trail reflect the general composition of the surrounding communities. Key characteristics include:

- above provincial average education
- the demographics are unusual
 - much less cosmopolitan than the average
 - a large majority are Euro-Canadians

Interest in the Natural and Cultural Heritage

- broad spectrum
 - many will have participated in heritage and natural history programs provided by the many local heritage interpretation providers and have a deep appreciation and understanding
 - many have not participated and have only a rudimentary understanding of local historic and natural topics

Seasonal Use of the Fort-to-Fort Trail

- the trail gets year-round use
- heaviest use is likely summer
- fall and spring get strong use, especially on sunny weekends
- winter likely gets least use

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Secondary Audience

Secondary audiences are smaller user groups who may have a more seasonal presence. We expect the size of these groups to increase over time as the trail becomes known by an increasing number of visitors from further away.

Day Trippers (Lower Mainland Residents)

This is a potentially large group. It is likely that many recreation-minded lower mainlanders will be attracted by the presence of two GVRD Parks (Derby Reach and Brae Island). Also, promotion of the Fort by Parks Canada and the Village by the local chamber of commerce could attract many additional lower mainlanders.

This group's understanding of local natural and cultural history will vary greatly.

Vacationers (BC Residents, Visitors from the Rest of Canada, USA and the world)

Presently the percentage of visitors from this group to the area is small, except for those visiting the Fort (51% in 1998). It is not likely that large numbers of vacationers who visit the Fort will use the Fort-to-Fort Trail until the Fort trailhead on Glover Road is better marked and the section through the Interfor lands is re-routed.

School Classes

Presently, there is no indication that school groups use the trail. However, large numbers of students visit the Fort on history field trips and many groups visit Derby Reach Regional Park for environmental education excursions. The Fort-to-Fort Trail offers many opportunities for natural and cultural history studies in the future.

Implications

Interests

The largest group of trail users have a general interest in local natural and cultural history. Many have special knowledge on some topic of geology, biology, or local history. Finally, a large number of the adults in the neighbourhood are relatively highly educated.

The messages can be in greater detail and depth than for many audiences. Messages can build on general local knowledge and may include fairly complex concepts.

Return Visitors

These visitors will not be satisfied with information alone, although facts must be included. Instead, the signs could become a reference/resource, inspiration that regular users can refer to on multiple visits.

Several options are available to facilitate the long-term usefulness of interpretive signs:

- include advice on skill development (e.g., wildlife-watching skills) that target users can develop over time
- reference things to look for at different times of year (seasonal wildlife, natural phenomena such as migrations)
- design sign panels to be changed seasonally or at other predetermined intervals so that return visitors can look forward to new information and ideas
- signs can remind trail users to practice skills, be aware of sensory stimuli, and generally play host to a spirit of exploration, observation and enjoyment.

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Section 2

Facilities and Interpretive Media Inventory

The Fort-to-Fort Trail has the unusual benefit of being associated with other interpretive facilities and programs in the Fort Langley Area.

Fort Langley National Historic Site

The Fort, open year-round, is located immediately beside the eastern trailhead of the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The focus of the Fort's programs is on the history of Fort Langley from its founding in 1827 through to its decline after the founding of the colony of British Columbia in 1858. Interpretive services includes a visitor centre, exhibits, a restored fort and buildings plus, living history, and special event.

Site staff have indicated that some of their visitors use the trail after their visit to the Fort.

The location of the Fort adjacent to the trail provides a great opportunity to integrate messages and experiences. For example, one of the messages delivered at the Fort is that the Fraser River was and remains an important transportation corridor. People walking the trail will be able to see present traffic on and along the river and to imagine how this landscape looked in the time of the Hudson Bay Company.

Langley Centennial Museum

The Museum, open year round, is located several hundred metres from the Fort Langley Trailhead of the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The Centennial Museum focuses on Langley's history and prehistory with exhibits on first nations peoples and the European settlers of this area.

The museum also provides special events and school programs based on historical themes. It is close to the Fort end of the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The free admission makes this an ideal place for Fort-to-Fort Trail hikers to drop into to ask questions that they developed along the trail or to follow up on stimulated interests.

Langley CN Station Museum

This museum is run by volunteers from the Langley Heritage Society and is located approximately 500 meters along the Fort-to-Fort Trail from the Fort trailhead, in the town of Fort Langley, adjacent to the CN Railway tracks. This small museum features exhibits and a small selection of rolling stock from the early to mid-1900s.

The museum's transportation theme could have connections with the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

BC Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum

The farm museum specializes in old farm machinery. It is closed in the winter.

The museum has limited connections with the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Derby Reach Regional Park

This park is part of GVRD Parks-East Area. The first 1 km section of the Fort-to-Fort Trail passes through the eastern edge of Derby Reach Regional Park. The park also contains several multi-use trails that join the Fort-to-Fort Trail at its western trailhead. Many trail users see these trails as logical continuations of each other. The park and trails have many regular users who also take part in special events. As well, the park has a heritage node adjacent to the western trailhead of the Fort-

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Section 3

Research and Topic Selection

Site Inventory: What is There to Interpret?

Introduction

A site inventory identifies issues and resources that may be interpreted. These resources consist of:

- Human History/Cultural Features
- Natural History Features
- Resource/Visitor Management Concerns

The features identified in the site inventory need not all be interpreted in any one interpretive project. Rather, the items described can be considered as a catalogue of features to be chosen from to create an effective interpretive experience.

Methods

Information was gathered from documents on the trail and adjacent lands. The following resources were used:

- 11 x 17 reductions Fort-to-Fort Trail survey of Phase 1, Phase 2&3
- 11 x 17 reductions of Derby Reach Regional Park interpretive signs
- The Kwantlen and Brae Island: An ethnographical and Oral Historical Account
- Fort Langley National Historic Site (info downloaded from website)
- Derby Reach to Fort Langley Trail: A Report submitted by Sharp And Diamond Landscape Architecture, March 1993
- Milner: The evolution of a Cultural Landscape.
- Excerpts from the Proposed Recreation Plan for the Fraser River Estuary
- Derby Reach Management Plan May 1999
- Heritage Resource Analysis & Interpretive Plan August 2001
- Archeological Overview Assessment of Milner and the Hudson's Bay Company Farm
- Environmental Inventory and Evaluation of Brae Island Regional Park 1999
- Excerpts from the Fraser River Estuary Proposed Recreation Plan 1990
- Derby Reach to Fort Langley Trail Study draft report 1993
- Various internet sites were also visited for detailed natural history information
- Derby Reach Biophysical Addendum
- Other documents, photos and pages provided by various contacts
- Four visits to the Fort-to-Fort Trail were made by the consultants to access the features on the ground

Results

A. Human History

The human history of the Fort Langley area has been researched more thoroughly than in most areas in BC. Early human settlement from prehistory to first European contact is covered by the Langley Centennial Museum. Early European history is covered jointly by the Centennial Museum, Fort Langley Historic Site, and Derby Reach Regional Park.

The following information summaries do not cover historic events in great detail.

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Instead they are highlights that may be included in the interpretive trail signs.

Prehistory

The Lower Fraser River has been the home of First Nations people since the end of the last ice age. The landscape of Fort Langley at that time was significantly different from that of today. The Fraser Delta had not yet expanded to its current limits. Much of Richmond was open ocean. Fort Langley was most likely part of the marshy estuary similar to present day Georgia Bank. The soils along the trail originated from river and ocean sediments. Since those early times people lived near and on the river fishing for salmon and hunting.

Historic Period

First Nations

The First Nations people used this area for fishing and as a transportation corridor. The Salmon River was part of a short-cut route used by some groups to access the Fraser from their home territories as far away as Vancouver Island for salmon fishing. The Hudson Bay Company traders that lived at Fort Langley came to depend on First Nations people, particularly the local Sto:Lo people for their skills and knowledge as fishers and as trading partners. By 1829, the first commercial fisheries in southern British Columbia were established with active trade between the First Nations people and the Fort.

First Nations people here continue their relationship with the salmon. Members of the Kwantlen First Nation from McMillan Island regularly fish for salmon within sight of the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

First European Contact

The Fort Langley area was visited by explorer Simon Fraser as his expedition explored the river that was given his name. His party was the first group of Europeans to visit this site.

First European Settlement

Fort Langley was the first European settlement on the Fraser River. Important sites along the trail include:

- the original Fort Langley site at Derby Reach
- the site of storage sheds at the mouth of the Salmon River
- Fort Langley National Historic Site
- trail to the Hudson Bay Company's farm

A town by the name of Derby was planned for Derby Reach. It was to be the capital of British Columbia. The roads were surveyed and some buildings were constructed before the town of New Westminster was chosen as the capital instead.

The Fraser Gold Rush

The gold rush was a turning point in the fortunes of Fort Langley. Initially, it was a major supply point for prospectors moving up river. Eventually, the town was passed over by the ever increasing flow of commerce up river and the Fort went into a decline.

The Colony of British Columbia

The early colonial period was a time of decline for Fort Langley. However, as time passed more people moved into the area and it gradually became a farming community.

Recent Developments

The lower mainland of British Columbia has become one of Canada's most populous and industrialized regions. One of the biggest changes has been aggressive flood control and channel maintenance of the Fraser. Other changes include increased settlement, farming and industrialization.

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B. Natural History

Natural Communities

Fraser River

The Fraser River is one of the world's great rivers. It dominates the landscape. It acts as a conveyor belt transporting mud, sand, gravel and rocks eroded from the surrounding mountains upstream. This material is deposited in a vast delta that has grown immensely. Ten thousand years ago, the river mouth was at New Westminster. The river's fast flowing current, seasonal fluctuations in level (highest in June and early July, lowest before the fall rains begin), and occasional catastrophic floods (highest on records occurred in 1894, others of importance occurred in 1948, 1950, 1964, and 1972) have, until recent times, moved the river bed back and forth over the flood plain. Evidence of this large scale movement can be seen in the nearby Salmon River basin, much of which is the bed of an ancient ox-bow lake formed from an old section of the Fraser River. Today, smaller-scale but still impressive evidence of the river's power to change landscapes can be seen in the significant annual erosion of Derby Bluffs, the sand deposition on the edgewater bar just north of the Derby Reach Trailhead, and the quantities of sediment carried in the river's dark waters.

The river is also a travelway for many fish and birds. It is Canada's most important salmon river hosting millions of adult salmon migrating upstream to spawn and even larger numbers of juveniles swimming downstream to the sea. Many species of migrating birds follow the river corridor to travel on their seasonal journeys.

The river is home to many other species of fish (including the white sturgeon), bird, mammals and other life.

River Islands

Brae Island is located just across the narrow Bedford Channel from the central section of the trail. The island is made up of river-born sediments and is continually being changed by river erosion and deposition. The forest that covers much of the island is flood plain forest mostly red alder and black cottonwood. This forest is typical of landscapes that are disturbed by occasional inundations of high water.

Town site

Approximately the first kilometre of the eastern end of the trail passes through the village of Fort Langley. The route follows Mavis Road west across Glover Road to the CN Station, and jogs north along Glover to cross the CN tracks. The natural landscape of this section is limited to lawns and residential lots beside the upper (eastern) section of Mavis Road. Further down, the trail passes through part of the paved downtown section of Fort Langley.

Industrial Site

This section runs from Glover road between the CN tracks on the west and the Interfor Mill (the historic McMillan Cedar Mill) to the east. At present, the trail is narrow and is bordered on both sides by chain-link fence topped with barbed wire.

Vegetation is sparse with a few non-native pioneer invasive plants such as scotch broom softening the edges of large expanses of pavement and buildings under demolition. The old McMillan Cedar Mill site is in the process of being decommissioned. This land is slated for residential development, and the trail route will be changed.

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Disturbance Zone

This section of trail (approx. 400 metres) cuts from the CN Rail line to the river. It passes through a disturbed area consisting of a thin buffer of cottonwoods, exposed sandy soil (Fraser River deposits), and hardy pioneer plants.

Salmon River

The Salmon River Watershed is considered one of the last remaining watersheds in the Greater Vancouver Regional District still able to support productive fish stocks.

Riverside (Riparian) Vegetation

This section of trail passes along the edge of the Bedford Channel and beside the Langley Golf Course. There are clear views of Brae Island. This land is low and is the section of the trail most subject to flooding.

Here the landscape is quite natural and represents riverside riparian communities. Vegetation consists of cottonwood, willows, and various shrubs, grasses and sedges. There are considerable numbers of pilings imbedded in the channel.

Wildlife in this area include ducks, herons, mink, beaver, frogs and numerous perching birds.

Mixed Forest

After passing by the golf course, the trail rises and enters a section of mixed lowland forest. Here, there are alders, cottonwood, vine maple as well as conifers such as western red cedar and grand fir. The understory is thick and the trunks of trees are coated with mosses and licorice ferns. This dense forest is good nesting habitat for perching birds like robins, wrens and chickadees.

Farmland

After passing through the mixed lowland forest, the trail emerges into open farm land and follows Allard Crescent. The land is dominated by residential acreage and hobby farms. The open pasture fields have numerous mounds perhaps made by rare coastal moles (*Scapanus orarius*).

Old Field

This section of trail cuts east from Allard Road toward the river into Derby Reach Regional Park. The trail then follows the river to its western trailhead.

The habitat surrounding most of the trail is open old field community consisting of grasses and herbs, and some hedges of invasive, non-native blackberry. This is a transition zone where cultivated farmland is reverting through a long process of natural succession back to a natural forest. Long-lived remnant fruit trees still stand out in parts of the wild-looking field.

Derby Bluffs

The entire section of trail that passes through Derby Reach is bordered by the higher, steep, quickly eroding south shore of the Fraser known as Derby Bluffs. Here, at a major bend in the fast flowing river, the current in a deep channel cuts into its bank taking away big chunks of shoreline.

The vegetation along this bank is fast growing willow and alder. In several places there is fresh and old evidence of beaver activity—felled trees, beaver chewed stumps, wood chips and peeled sticks.

Pond

In the old field section of the trail, there is a pond located in a low area adjacent to Allard Crescent. The trail affords some good distant views of the pond. In winter, the pond is used by numerous ducks including mallards and several species of



diving ducks. There are also several ponds along Allard Crescent. One of these has a beaver lodge and a dam on it. It may be possible for visitors to observe beaver activity in the morning and evening from the trail.

Key Processes And Seasonal Events

Three key natural processes and seasonal events take place along the Fort-to-Fort Trail. Key points about these features are briefly summarized below:

- High Water
 - high water on the Fraser occurs in June and early July when the snow in the mountains of the upper Fraser basin melt
 - this is part of the natural pulse of the river, which shapes not only local areas of the river (e.g., eroding Derby Bluff), but is responsible for shaping the huge Fraser delta and sending the huge billows of silt and nutrient laden fresh water into the Georgia Strait (the Fraser Plume)
 - evidence of past high water can be observed
 - flood suppression over the last 100 years has resulted in changes in structure, vegetation and ecology of the lower Fraser
- Seasonal Blooms
 - spring flowers can provide attractive displays
- Migrations
 - the Fraser is a wildlife migration corridor
 - Salmon
 - the west coast's biggest salmon run goes up this river
 - watch for fishing activity on the river for signs when the runs occur
 - Water Birds
 - the Fraser is a spring and summer highway for many species of birds such as ducks and loon that spend their summers in the interior and north of Canada and spend their winters in coastal BC waters

These processes or their effects are key, observable phenomena that should be considered when developing interpretive programs for the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Viewscapes

The Fort-to-Fort Trail offers several breath taking viewscapes that must be considered as features for the interpretive subjects. They include:

The Fraser River



The Fort-to-Fort Trail provides several spectacular views of the Fraser. The Fraser is one of the world's great rivers, comparable in power and importance with the St. Lawrence, the Nile, and the Mississippi. It drains an enormous amount of land, has vast amounts of water in and carves and shapes the landscape. It has an enormous ecological impact on the biosphere and commercial value and impact on people that live near it.

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Interpretive Plan

Mount Baker



This tall, sleeping volcano dominates some of the southern views from the trail. Its story as part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, and the part volcanoes play in the formation of the coastal mountain range in BC and the US can be told.

Golden Ears



This mountain dominates views to the northeast. It sits on the north edge of the Fraser flood plain. The view represents the steep mountains that dominate the Fraser Basin further north and east. It is from steep snow-covered mountains like this that the water, mud, gravel and nutrients of the lower Fraser come.

D. Management Concerns

Interpretation can be a powerful management tool. Visitors are much more willing to comply with regulations when they understand the need for them and the effects of non-compliance. Although pointing out the minor importance of the concerns, Langley Township and GVRD Parks staff have identified the following management issues related to the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Dogs Off Leash

Staff indicate that a major concern on the Fort-to-Fort Trail, as well as the other trails in Derby Reach Regional Park is dog control. Inappropriate interactions of dogs with each other, hikers, runners and cyclists and damage to sensitive riparian habitat was indicated as the major problem on the trail. Trail rules are posted at trail heads and other places, but, many dog owners do not comply. Derby Reach does have a dogs-off-leash area on the western edge of the park.

Inappropriate Parking

There are parking lots at both ends of the trail. Problems occur at other access points along the trail where trail users park their cars in or across private driveways, or along streets in unsafe locations. As well, during special events at Derby Reach Regional Park, the small parking lot at the western trailhead is quickly filled and people park their cars along Allard Crescent causing congestion and endangering other people getting in and out of their parked cars.

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Trailhead Signs

Trail head signs have many functions:

Promotion. They create an initial awareness and then a reminder that the Fort-to-Fort Trail is waiting to be explored. High visibility is required to alert public to this valuable community resource, ensuring that the trail is well-used by the target audience. A high level of regular users will tend to decrease the chance of vandalism, again increasing value for dollar.

Orientation. They provide the information necessary about trail route, distance, locations of interpretive signs, any facilities, access points etc for people to use when planning their outing.

Introduction. They introduce the interpretive experience, much as the introduction to a book or the welcome at a house party does. People feel invited, interested and will more likely interact with the interpretive signs.

Host Presence. In the same way, trail head signs also promote responsible trail use and etiquette, reducing management issues and requirements.

In our assessment, the current trail head signs do not fulfill all of these functions. In order for trail users to get the most from the interpretive sign experience and the trail itself, and to reduce the potential for vandalism and management requirements, EcoLeaders proposes to write four new trail head signs. Two will replace or accompany existing structures, and two will be new. All will have some common features, such as a map and general welcome, but other aspects will be specific to the location of each trail head.

We recommend trailhead signs at four locations:

Fort Langley National Historic Site*

- a natural starting place for visitors exiting the Fort
- At present, the trail head for the Fort-to-Fort Trail is located on Mavis Road. It is not easily visible from the entrance/exit of the Fort Langley NHS visitor centre.

We recommend placement close to the entrance to the Fort visitor centre. This location should be chosen with care so that existing views of the Fraser River are not impeded and so that pedestrians can easily follow the trail to Mavis Road.

The CN Rail Station Site on Glover Road*

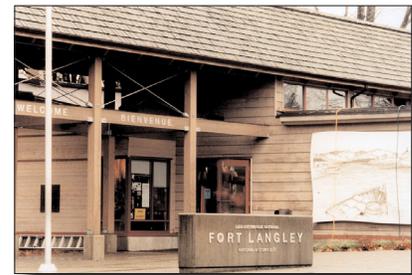
- a natural location for capturing the attention of pedestrian visitors to the Village of Fort Langley
- the sign would direct pedestrians to the Fort and to Derby Reach

The Big Bend of Allard Crescent

- This location is often congested by people parking cars along the side of the small spur road.
- Part of the message here would be to direct people to the parking lots at either end of the trail

Site of Original Fort Langley (Derby Reach Regional Park)*

- a natural starting place for people who are visiting the regional park
- this sign to be incorporated into the kiosk adjacent to the parking lot



**Trail Head 1:
Fort Langley National Historic Site**



**Trail Head 2:
Fort Langley CN Station**



**Trail Head 3:
Allard Crescent**



**Trail Head 4:
Derby Reach Regional Park**

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Interpretive Signs

Information Format

The sign rough content is recorded here for use in the context of the story line. It is written from the context of notes from an ideal trail user who often revisits the trail. This person makes observations and asks questions about what she/he sees. The questions may or may not be answered.

Rough content for each sign is recorded as follows:

Title

- a working title for the sign that briefly describes core message

Location

- a brief description of the location for the sign (often with a photo)

Questions

- a set of questions that the character writing the signs is likely to have at this site

Key Points

- information that can be included in the sign's messages

Distribution of the signs along the trail, titles, questions and key points may all be modified as writing and development progresses. Signs are presented in order from Fort Langley to Derby Reach Regional Park. In reality, the signs will stand alone and not need to be part of a linear experience. Most walkers may in fact experience the trail starting from the park end.

Rough Content

1. Sources of Information – Village of Fort Langley*

Location:

Part way down Mavis Road, with clear view of the Centennial Museum and the Agricultural Museum.

Key Points

- Fort Langley has an abundance of historic resources
 - Fort Langley National Historic Site
 - a great place to see how the first settlers partnered with first nations to develop a peaceful trade in furs and fish
 - Langley Centennial Museum
 - the place to learn about first nations and pioneer life
 - BC Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum
 - see how farming technology has changed over the years
 - CN Station
 - see some of the old train cars that helped open this country

2. Mill Waterfront

This location will become available when development of the Interfor property takes place.

- buildings and artifacts planned for proposed trail section are: Pump house, Boom Gear Hoist Frame, Band Mill and Hydraulic Barker

Other information that could be included

- Muench trail (now Allard Crescent) used to run through this area connecting Fort Langley with series of farms along Allard Crescent, perhaps all the way to Muench Bar in the west end Derby Reach Park
- 1925 a New West company started a tie mill (railroad ties?), then later lumber, when supplied timbers for first bridge across Bedford Channel (Jacob Haldi)

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- Interfor re-manufacturing “value-added” plant, then closed down (more details page with figure 6)
- trains were used to bring or take away product (probably take away in earlier days, then bring later for value-added)

3. Inland Mill Site

Location:

This site is located along the section of existing trail that skirts the northern edge of the property and joins Bedford Channel. The site overlooks a disturbed, sandy landscape – a borrow pit where Fraser flood plain sediment was probably mined for use as building material.

Key Points

- you can see the profile of the soil by looking at the soil banks, and you can see layers of deposition showing that this sand was laid down in several events, probably over many years
- the sand here is similar to that found in the edgewater bar in Derby Reach Regional Park
- this is evidence that the river bed used to be here

Questions

- How did the sand get here?
- How and why does the Fraser River move its bank?
- When was the river passing through here?

Other information that could be included

- Muench trail ran through this area connecting Fort Langley with series of farms along Allard Crescent, perhaps all the way to Muench Bar in the west end Derby Reach Park?
- Elderly living informants recall referring to the site as “the back forty”



4. Salmon River Pump Station*

Location:

This site is located on the south shore of the Salmon River where it drains into the Bedford Channel. The location was chosen to provide a view of the pump station and the dyke.

Key Points

Questions

- What is this structure?
- Why is it here?

- Dykes can be seen here
 - can see the dyke structure if you stand on trail facing the pump station
 - dyke runs parallel to the Bedford Channel, just the other side of the golf course fence
 - trail beside golf-course is located on an old dyke
- originally may have been natural dykes built by deposited debris when the river flooded
- present day dykes are man-made, part of an extensive flood control system
 - pump house is part of this system, allowing Salmon River to drain into the Fraser River but preventing the Fraser river water from flowing into farmland during floods
 - special type of pump (archimedes screw) is used so that salmon can move up and down stream without being shredded by pump
 - see display of pumps at BC Farm Machinery and Agriculture Museum



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- each patch of shrubs is tallest in centre with shorter shrubs on the edges - indicates patch was started by a single pioneer plant which produced offspring (shorter plants) on its edges
- these patches will expand to fill up the open field
- this patchy field/brush habitat is ideal for many small birds for nesting and foraging - good bird watching
- watch for small dirt hills raised by the moles, perhaps the rare coast mole
- keep an eye open as you walk this part of the trail for the ruts of the old wagon road that used to run parallel to Allard Crescent
- this field probably looks something like Langley Prairie, the site of old Fort Langley's farm
 - to learn more about the Fort farm and early agriculture in the Fort Langley area drop into the Langley Centennial Museum and Fort Langley National Historic Site

11. Pond*

Location:

This location provides a view between two patches of brush of a large pond adjacent to Allard Crescent. If approached from the south, the site is ideal for water bird and wildlife watching because the hikers' approach is screened by vegetation from the creatures' view.

Key Points

- Why is there a pond here?
- How was it formed?
- What lives here?

- ponds like this one were formed by flooding and the changing of the river's course over time
 - this pond could have been part of an earlier bed of the river
- this pond is part of a larger wetland around Derby Creek and the peat bog it drains
- The Fraser Valley used to be full of small ponds and pocket wetlands like this
 - provided homes for wildlife like beaver (beaver lodges can be seen in other ponds in Derby Reach Regional Park)
 - also important rest stops for flocks of migrating birds
 - you can still see huge flocks of snow geese over-wintering in the Fraser delta
- Wood duck boxes are located around the pond
- Wildlife watching tips
 - bring a pair of binoculars and a field guide to North American Birds
 - approach the pond as quietly as you can
 - when you arrive at the viewing site, move slowly, speak softly
 - when you leave move smoothly and quietly



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Third Viewing Platform

Location:

This site is located in Derby Reach Regional Park, on the edge of the Fraser Bank and overlooks a section of the Fraser. We consider this present location to be ideal for boat spotting. However, the site is on a rapidly eroding bank. We expect that in the next five years the site will have to be abandoned for safety reasons.



Two of the Derby Reach Regional Park interpretive signs referring to the Sto:Lo village site are located within view of

the entrance to this platform.



Design Specifications

Interpretive Nodes

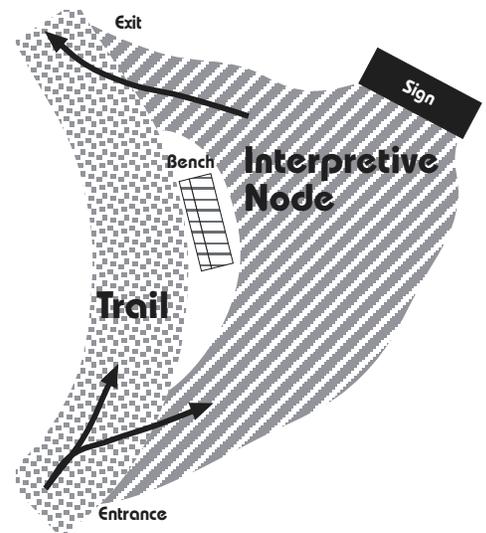
Design

We recommend that interpretive nodes be developed for all sign locations including trailhead signs. Township of Langley staff will design site-specific nodes and sign installations. The nodes are inviting areas consisting of widened trail design, an interpretive sign, and in some cases, seating for people to rest and enjoy the site. They are also natural stopping points for observing and reflection particularly for the active audiences identified. This difference in trail width will help trail users notice the signs, reduce trail congestion and ensure that slower moving visitors do not feel they are being rushed by other, faster moving trail users.

The Fort-to-Fort Trail has three viewing platforms that are ideally designed as interpretive nodes. Other nodes, if developed, need not be as elaborate.

Recommendations:

1. Interpretive nodes be placed adjacent to the trail so that people stopping to enjoy the interpretive nodes do not block the passage of other trail users.
2. Interpretive nodes be large enough to accommodate groups of two to three people and their bicycles.
3. Interpretive signs be placed at the edge of the nodes, allowing several visitors to interact with the signs at one time.
4. Interpretive nodes give visitors an opportunity to interact with (touch, smell, listen, view) trail resources being interpreted.



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5. When possible, seating be provided to give trail users a clear view of the landscape and trail-side features and a relaxing invitation to pause, observe and reflect—a necessary element in adult learning and enrichment.
6. When possible, interpretive nodes should have an entrance and an exit that will subtly direct trail users further down the trail.

Interpretive Node Locations

Sixteen sites were selected for interpretive nodes including 4 trailheads. One or two interpretive signs will be placed in each node. It should be remembered that the number of signs identified in this plan (19) exceeds the maximum number (12) budgeted for this project. We recommend that the remaining signs and the nodes that support them be developed in a future phase when funds are available.

Node selection criteria consisted of answering the following questions:

- Does the site fit the interpretive themes?
- Is the site accessible?
- Is the site safe for people to visit?
 - are there dangers getting there, or at the site?
- Is the site safe from people?
 - are the plants and animals there sensitive to human interference?

The following sites were selected (see map on facing page) An asterisk are nodes that contain the signs we propose for this phase of sign development:

Trail Heads

- Fort Langley National Historic Site*
- Big Bend in Allard Crescent
- CN Station*
- Derby Reach Regional Park*

Interpretive Nodes

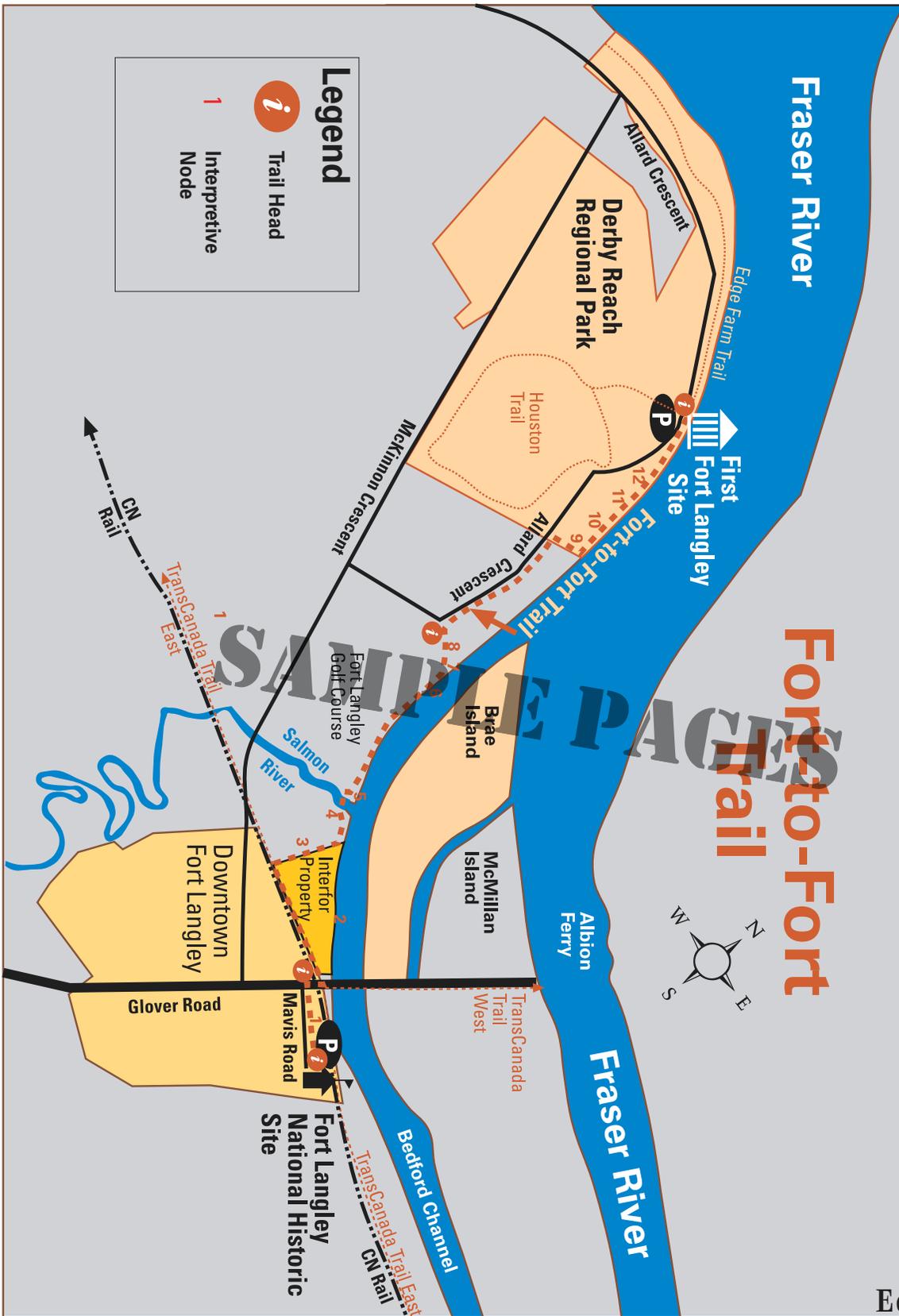
1. Sources of Information*
2. Mill Waterfront
3. Inland Mill Site
4. Salmon River Pumping Station (3 signs*)
5. Sights of the Salmon River
6. Bird Watching
7. Flood Plain Forest*
8. Upland Forest
9. The Big River (2 signs*)
10. Old Field
11. Pond*
12. Beaver Field

Note:

- several trail signs are clustered near the beginning sections of the trail to engage visitors quickly in the activities of observing and discovering.



Fort-to-Fort Trail



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