

February 17, 2026

BASIN TRAIL CREW PROGRAM BUILDS SKILLS AND CREATES JOBS

Local trails improved while creating seasonal employment opportunities

(Columbia Basin) – This spring and summer, people across the Columbia Basin will gain jobs and develop work skills while helping improve recreational trails for residents and visitors.

Through partnerships with community trails and recreation groups, Columbia Basin Trust's Basin Job Experience Trail Crew Program will help create 47 short-term jobs for people who are unemployed or underemployed.

Crew members will benefit from skills development and training, including carpentry, first aid, trail-building, chainsaw operations and GPS use, as they complete projects to maintain, repair and enhance local trails. The program will support 15 organizations in 13 communities with more than \$320,000.

"These opportunities will support employment while helping keep trails accessible, inviting and safe," said Kris Belanger, Senior Manager, Delivery of Benefits, Columbia Basin Trust. "Whether it's someone learning a new technical skill or growing their work experience, the trail crew jobs help strengthen our local workforce and ensure the sustainability of recreation assets that welcome people outdoors year-round."

A full list of participating trail and recreation organizations is available [here](#).

Fernie Trails Alliance Association

The Fernie Trails Alliance Association (FTA) manages a trail network for year-round activities including hiking, biking, trail running and cross-country skiing. With 370 kilometres of trail, the FTA has extensive maintenance and improvement needs each season. This year, the FTA trail crew will focus on new signage, trail surface repairs and completion of a technical biking feature on their newest trail, Bacon Bits.

"Columbia Basin Trust's Trail Crew wage subsidy program is critical to our ability to maintain and enhance our trails while building meaningful local employment," said Melanie Wrigglesworth, Executive Director of the Fernie Trails Alliance Association. "The program allows us to provide fair wages, mentorship and practical training, helping workers build confidence and professional skills while contributing directly to the Fernie trail network, a key piece of community infrastructure. These trails benefit residents, visitors and the local economy."

Kaslo Outdoor Recreation & Trails Society

Serving several outdoor recreation groups in their community, including the Kaslo Nordic Club, Kaslo Mountain Bike Club, Kaslo Disc Golf Club and the Kaslo Run Club, the Kaslo Outdoor Recreation & Trails Society (KORTS) has more than 400 members and multiple recreation assets to manage. This season, KORTS will tackle upgrades to its 75 kilometres of multi-use, non-motorized trails including the Kaslo Family Mountain Bike Park and community disc golf course, and will focus on danger tree assessments and removal.

“The variety of clubs under the KORTS umbrella encourages outdoor activity in our community in all kinds of ways. These active citizens depend on safe, reliable and well laid out trails,” said Dan Miles, President of the Kaslo Outdoor Recreation & Trails Society. “The Trail Crew program supports our team with training in trail building, FireSmart practices, and responding to extreme weather, blowdowns and erosion.”

Columbia Basin Trust supports the efforts of the people in the Columbia Basin to strengthen social, economic and environmental well-being. To learn more about the Trust’s programs and initiatives, visit ourtrust.org or call 1.800.505.8998.

- 30 -

Columbia Basin Trust is grateful to operate on the traditional territories of the Ktunaxa, Lheidli T’enneh, Secwépemc, Sinixt and Syilx Nations.

PHOTO 1: Fernie Trails Alliance trail crew members will gain skills and improve local trails as part of Columbia Basin Trust’s Basin Job Experience Trail Crew Program.

PHOTO 2: Kaslo Outdoor Recreation & Trails Society trail crew members will gain skills and improve local trails as part of Columbia Basin Trust’s Basin Job Experience Trail Crew Program. Photo: Steve Doucet.

AUDIO CLIP: Kris Belanger, Senior Manager with Columbia Basin Trust, discusses how Columbia Basin Trust’s Basin Job Experience Trail Crew Program supports local workers and benefits trail and outdoor recreations groups.

MEDIA CONTACT

Kathleen Hart
Columbia Basin Trust
1.800.505.8998
khart@ourtrust.org