

FOOTPRINTS ON THE SPINE

Fall, 2011



Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association (VISTA)

www.vispine.ca

Spine Series 2011 is in Full Swing!

The VI Spine Series is a series of fun events held over the course of each year to raise awareness about the proposed Spine Trail and to increase community support for the development of the Spine. This year, the Series is made up of more than a dozen events that are organized by local Vancouver Island outdoors groups.

Events range from hiking and mountain biking to trail running and road cycling. Some events even merge multiple sports into one giant race. Earlier in the year, we also included skiing and snowshoeing events.

...And They're Off!

On June 5th, our kickoff participants met at Cafe Fantastico at Docksider Green for a quick coffee, then a casual bike ride down the Galloping Goose trail (a part of the southern end of the VI Spine) to Royal Roads University, where they were met with snacks and drinks and held a small celebration. Fol Epi was generous enough to donate some delicious pastry treats for us! The peacocks watched us snack, the riders took some opportunities for photographs, and one of our directors, Charles Burnett, gave a small welcome speech. Royal Roads University even welcomed our riders with a marquee!



The 2011 series has been running along smoothly since our kickoff event. Though we have had a couple of unfortunate cancellations, the other events have gone off with a bang and there have been smiles all around.

And there are still plenty of events left this year!

Read all about our past and future 2011 events on the next page.

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Series 2011 Past & Future

So far this year, VISTA members have traversed Mount Becher and Mount Albert Edward by skis, they've run trails near Lake Cowichan, hiked rough trails to the north tip of the island, and busted a gut at Mount Washington! And there's so much more to come!

Some of the upcoming events include:

- Great Lake Walk & Ultramarathon – 65km route around Lake Cowichan!
- Lake Cowichan Terry Fox Run - Relive a piece of history and make a difference!
- Mind Over Mountain Adventure Race (MOMAR) – multiple sporting events including kayaks, running, and cycling!
- Road cycling tour from Woss to Port Hardy – 104 kilometers!
- Port Hardy Family Fun Salmon Run – something for the kids, too!

Extreme Website Makeover!

Our new VISTA website was launched at the end of April this year. The website describes in detail our approach to the trail concept, including an overall map view of the proposed trail route, information on sponsors and other ways to contribute. We also have built pages for each of our series events; before the event these are a great place to get all the information you seek, and after the event, we will often write a trip log and post photos.

A huge feature of the website that we would like to promote is the idea of a "passport". Although the passport system is not quite up and running yet, it will allow users to log in and boast about their own participation in series events. It will provide them a place to post their own photos and trip logs.

Come on over and visit us at www.vispine.ca today!

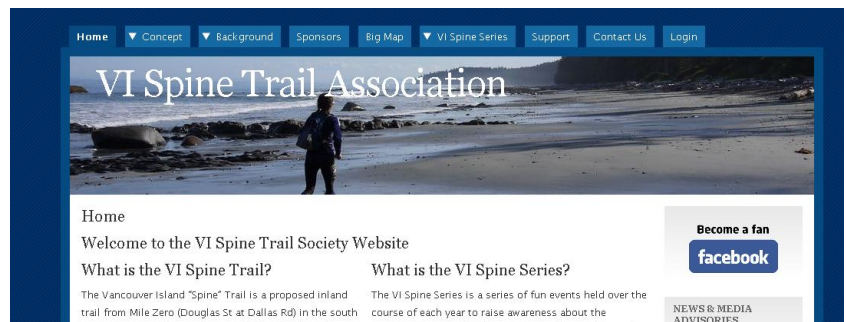
- Perseverance Trail Run – 3 to 10km run in the hills of Cumberland!

And more events are being added all the time.

To top it all off, in early November, we will be hosting a Finale – a repeat of the successful bike ride from downtown to Royal Roads University.

We would love to see more people participating and helping us grow the support for the trail. If you or your outdoor club would like to team up with VISTA for another event, we would gladly add it to our series! Just contact the project managers at series@vispine.ca.

Individual entrants can sign up for one or more Sections of the Series. Team entries are also welcome! We are still working on our sign-up systems; for now, register yourself with the host organization and sign up with VISTA by emailing series@vispine.ca.



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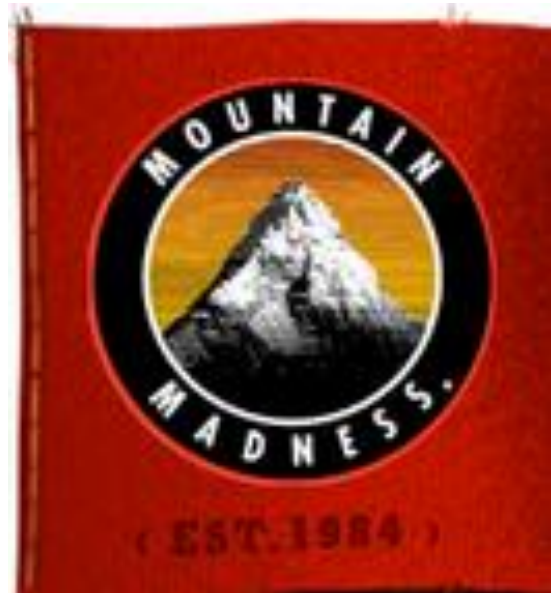
Prizes, Prizes, Prizes!

Thanks to generous sponsor support, VISTA will be giving away prizes at our finale Series event! Each member participating in three or more series events is eligible for the grand prizes. This year our big prize is a guided mountain tour donated by Mountain Madness. Worth \$800, it will be sure to please any outdoor enthusiast! We also have gift baskets from Level Ground Trading and more.

A big Vista thanks to Mountain Madness of Seattle for donating our top prize of a guided climb of Mt Baker!

To see an example of this climb, please check out:

<http://www.mountainmadness.com/adventures/alpine-climbing/washington/mount-baker-coleman-deming-glacier#trip-overview/description>

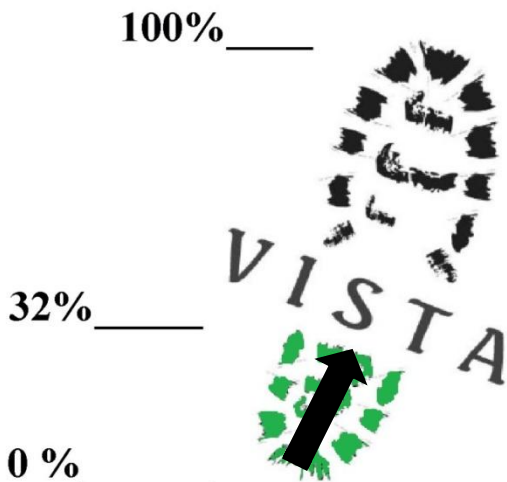


www.mountainmadness.com

Current Trail Status

So how are we doing on the progress of actually completing the Spine Trail?

This August, we have calculated the numbers out to 32%!



VISTA Vice President Andrew Pape-Salmon Participating in the 2011 Cowichan River Trail Run



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Update on the Current Status of the VI Spine Trail



The current status of the VI Spine Trail shows some amazing facts and some huge challenges. Of the total 700km that VISTA estimates to complete the VI Spine, 222km or 32 % is built or passable. There is a long hike still to go.

Recent progress is evident in two of the VI Spine segments:

Firstly, the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) is the same route as VI Spine from Victoria to Lake Cowichan. July 28th saw the opening of the Kinsol Trestle, connecting trails north and south of the Koksilah River. A major fund raising effort by the community in the Cowichan Valley was the basis for the success of this \$6m plus project. Included was a \$250,000 grant from the TCT. The completion of the trestle reconstruction shows that when a project

catches the public interest, major projects can be completed. Also for this segment, funds have been available for some time for the completion of the TCT/VI Spine over the Malahat by the CRD and CVRD regional districts. The only delays are lack of staff and urgency in these jurisdictions and a small (750m) section of right of way that needs to be purchased to complete the land access. VISTA had been advised that work would start in 2011. However, by a recent article in the Times Colonist, we now find the schedule is for 2015. We need public outcry against these date slippages.

In the second segment, Lake Cowichan to the Alberni Canal, VISTA is taking an initiative to speed up acceptance of the route. After the completion of the 20km "Runners Trail" in 2010, there has been no additional trail built. As a result, VISTA sought bids from foresters and trail experts to define the feasibility of the proposed route, and has chosen a consultant, Robert Gunn and Associates from Port Alberni. VISTA sees this study as a worthwhile \$8k expenditure - VISTA is seeking funding for this study, from sources that cannot be named yet.

Depending upon the success of this study in actually filling another gap in the VI Spine built, it will become a model for development of future gaps on the VI Spine route.

Vista's Strategic Business Plan

Vista's Directors have completed a comprehensive Strategic Business Plan which is in its final editing stage and will be available by late September. Stay tuned for announcement of it, and its availability on www.vispine.ca

Your feedback is encouraged and valued – Please contact the Editor at Henley@islandnet.com

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