

# TrailRiders come to the Shuswap

The campaign to bring three TrailRiders (the one wheeled piece of adaptable equipment with a seat for a disabled person to sit on and bars on the front and back for Sherpa's to propel forward on trails) has just taken a big step forward, thanks to a grant from the Province.

"We've just received our first major campaign partner grant," says Debra MacDonald, who has spearheaded the effort to make TrailRiders available to people throughout the Shuswap. Working with the Shuswap Trail Alliance, Debra has been championing the cause to service clubs, granting agencies, and individuals throughout the region. To date, over \$1300 has been raised in individual donations, including a \$500 contribution from the Professional Forestry Association.

The Shuswap Trail Alliance has now been able to partner with the Province through the Parks Enhancement Funding program to secure a \$7200 grant toward the purchase of the first TrailRider.

"The Province is partnering with organizations like the Shuswap Trail Alliance to ensure that everyone can enjoy our world class parks system," says

Environment Minister Mary Polak. "I'd like to thank the individuals and sponsors who made donations through the Park Enhancement Fund and to everyone involved in bringing TrailRiders to the Shuswap."

The Province's Park Enhancement Fund allows BC Parks to enter into partnerships that support various enhancements to B.C.'s parks system, like enhancing information, education and interpretation programs, planning projects, capital investments and restoration. Through sponsorships, donations, bequests, partnerships and revenue generated from the

Province's Discover Camping reservation service, the Park Enhancement Fund has contributed approximately \$8 million to parks and protected areas since its inception in 2008.

"We're really excited," says Phil McIntyre-Paul, Executive Director of the Shuswap Trail Alliance. "We have a strong working partnership with the



Shuswap resident, Debra McDonald (seated), celebrates recent Provincial funding to support the region's first TrailRider. Debra has championed a campaign with the Shuswap Trail Alliance and other community partners to fund three TrailRiders available to assist people with mobility challenges access Shuswap Trails. Photo contributed.

Province. This falls directly within their mandate to increase the accessibility of the Parks to people with mobility challenges."

Before Debra's illness with Multiple Sclerosis, which put her in a wheelchair, she worked in the forest industry for 20 years. "This gave me opportunities working outdoors that most people with a disability will never experience," she says. The TrailRider changes that. "My goal is to get people with all disabilities to experience the great outdoors. The Province has made that a real possibility for people in the Shuswap."

"The TrailRider fits the big

picture of getting people outside, active, and connected with their environment," says Phil McIntyre-Paul. "We'd like to see two in place by the fall to promote better accessibility of our greenway trails to more people, and now we can make getting people out onto our BC Parks trails a priority."

With the first TrailRider firmly in place, Debra and the Shuswap Trail Alliance are looking to community partners to assemble funds for the second and third TrailRider. "We've met our summer goal to raise the first \$7000," says Debra. "Now we're focusing on hitting our second target of \$7000 for this fall, and the third \$7000 by next spring." She points out that with over \$1000 already in place, and some strong partner requests already out in the community, the second TrailRider may not be too far behind the first.

The Shuswap TrailRider campaign's goal is to raise \$21,000 plus an additional \$9200 in in-kind support to purchase three TrailRiders and all the equipment and storage container to run a successful and safe signout program. The Shuswap Trail Alliance is supporting the effort by managing donations, issuing charitable

receipts, and working with Debra who will manage the sign-out program.

Charitable donations can be made by mailing a cheque to the Shuswap Trail Alliance, PO Box 1531, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4P6, and clearly mark that it is for the TrailRider Project; or call the Alliance at 250-832-0102. For more information on the TrailRider or to book a demo, call Debra at 250-832-1353. Debra's TrailRider demo website can be found at [www.shuswap-trailrider.com](http://www.shuswap-trailrider.com). And check it out on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqBGDalB-1ZM>.