

# Friends of Black Mountain/sntsk'il'ntən Regional Park

September 2018 Newsletter



Westbank First Nations students from Mount Boucherie Secondary School and KLO Middle School dig in to help build a new trail in the park. They made huge strides on the first day of trail construction.

## **Friends of Black Mountain Successfully Fundraise for Black Mountain/sntsk'il'ntən Regional Park**

by Ian Pooley

Friends of Black Mountain have successfully raised more than \$15,000 towards the construction of the first part of what will become an extensive trail network. The money was donated by Toronto Dominion Bank, through their Friends of the Environment funding program, and by Mountain Equipment Co-op. We are grateful to both organizations for recognizing the importance of the environment and for supporting local outdoor recreation.

We are particularly proud that the volunteer groups that will be able to work on the project as a direct result of the funding include forty students from Westbank First Nation, who will start work in mid-September. The group is led by Kyla Winacott, of the Academy of Indigenous Studies at Mount Boucherie Secondary, with the assistance of Nicole Werstuik, manager of the Youth/Recreation program at Westbank First Nation.

We are also delighted that Stacy Smith, who leads the Rutland Senior Secondary Outdoor Education program, will be heading a second group of thirty students who will begin work in early October.

Regional Parks, with the help of Cathy Mackenzie, Parks Natural Resource Technician and Volunteer Coordinator, will be providing equipment for the project, including shovels, rakes and wheelbarrows. Regional Parks intends to complete trail preparation work in early September, including clearing of weeds and grass along the trail route, preparation of the ground and stockpiling of gravel. The volunteer groups will be doing the grunt work of moving and laying the gravel. The intent is to build a section of roughly meter-wide gravel trail leading from just above Swainson Road gate to the ephemeral ponds. The far point of the trail will provide sweeping views of the Okanagan Valley and Okanagan Lake. This first leg of what will become a larger network is intended to be an easy hike. It will be especially suitable for the special needs adults who participate in the Community Recreational Initiatives Society (CRIS) program.

Depending on the pace of construction, Friends of Black Mountain may be calling on regular members to help the two volunteer groups to complete the trail before

winter sets in. We will keep members posted, as well as those of you who are on our regular hikers' list.

