



## Commonage Trail

by Dave Smith,  
Ribbons of Green Trails Society Director

The **Commonage Trail** is a regional pathway located in the Mission Hill subdivision, taking you above the houses into open fields. The trail runs 2.4 km from Okanagan Avenue, on the hill beside Fulton High School, up to Mission Road.

My wife and I walked the full 40 minute route recently, and were happy to see a number of people walking it. Most were dog walkers from the neighbourhood, and I'll give them full marks for keeping the trail clean! Because the trail is broad and the switchbacks are moderate, this trail is also suitable for jogging or bicycling.

The Commonage Trail can be accessed from either Okanagan Avenue or Mission Road. Two trailheads exist on Okanagan Avenue, one at the intersection of Fulton Road; the other at the intersection of South Vernon Drive.

To access the **Okanagan Avenue trailheads** from downtown, take 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue west to Fulton Road, and drive past Fulton High School to Okanagan Avenue. Parking on Okanagan Avenue is limited, however vehicles can park on Fulton Road, South Vernon Drive, and in Parking Lot D of Grahame Park.

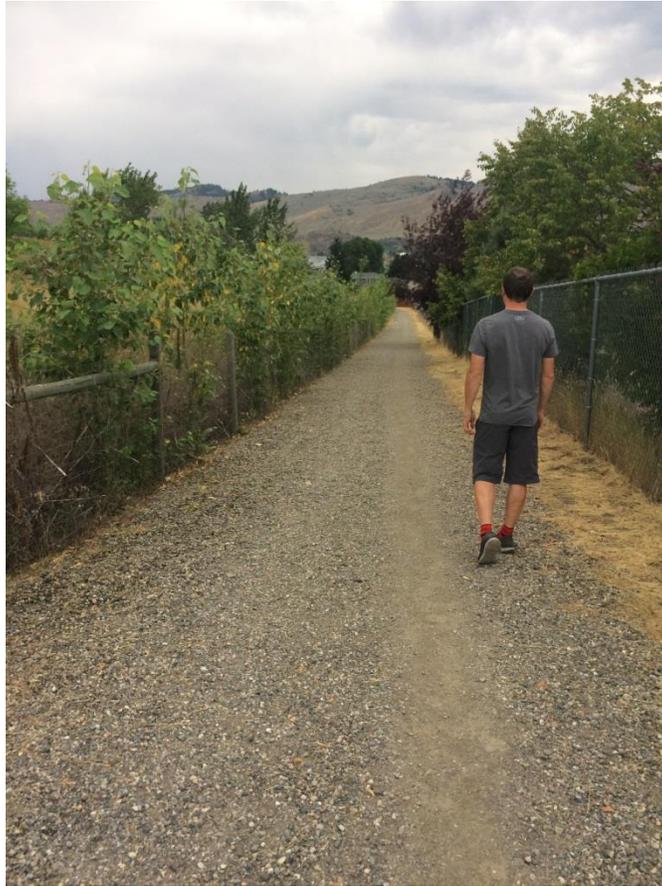
Starting on either Okanagan Avenue trailhead, gentle switchbacks climb the hillside into open fields. As the trail climbs higher, big views open up of Okanagan Lake, Bella Vista hills, Vernon, Swan Lake, and Silver Star mountain. The trail then follows above the houseline towards the DND Army Camp.

Above you all the way are grasslands, enjoyed by a variety of birds including quail, robins, and woodpeckers. You may hear coyotes in the summer evenings.

To access Commonage Trail from **Mission Road**, the fenced trailhead and map are located south of Noric House, on the west side of Mission Road. A pedestrian light and crosswalk are provided to assist crossing Mission Road. Parking is available at the adjacent DND baseball fields. Dog bags and garbage bins are available at all of the trailheads

From Mission Road, this trail continues another 800 meters northeast to connect with the Jack Schratte bike path which leads to Okanagan College and the Athletics Park. For longer routes, you have a safe bike ride from Mission Hill past Okanagan College, down to Kal Beach and the Okanagan Rail Trail.

City engineering is actively working on obtaining access midway along the trail, making it easier for Mission Hill residents to take short strolls up into the open fields. The community is built on a hillside connecting down to Okanagan Avenue by a long staircase, nicknamed 'Stairway to Heaven'. Once the trail connections are completed, you'll be able to walk from Mission Hill Elementary, with its park, through to Fulton School, in open fields most of the way.



Commonage Trail near Mission Road entrance



Commonage Trail overlooking Okanagan Lake