

Society weaves ribbons of green

Welcome to a new monthly column by the Ribbons of Green Trails Society which will explore the numerous walking, hiking, and cycling opportunities in Vernon and area. Each month a different trail will be featured.

Greater Vernon has many beautiful and diverse trails that weave ribbons of green throughout our community. Do you know where these trails are located? With the arrival of spring it's time to dust off your hiking boots and head outdoors to discover these wonderful paths!

The **Ribbons of Green Trails Society (RoGTS)** is a registered non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to the promotion and construction of walking, hiking and cycling trails, both on and off-road. Working closely with the municipalities of the Greater Vernon region, RoGTS promotes a vision for a system of linear parks, pathways, and bikeways which tie urban areas to parks and natural scenic areas.

One of our mandates is to increase community participation in healthy activities. Another mandate is to educate trail users about the geography, plants, and culture in the areas where trails are located.

Let's start our first hike on a section of the historic and picturesque **Grey Canal Trail!**

Grey Canal Trail



Built in the early 1900's, the Grey Canal was BC's longest irrigation channel extending from Lavington to Okanagan Lake. The 50 km (30 mile) canal sustained orchards and agricultural land throughout the Vernon and Coldstream valleys. It was named after Albert Henry George Grey, the 4th Earl Grey, who was the Governor General of Canada at the time. The Grey Canal was in use until 1970 when rising costs forced its closure.

Several sections of the original Grey Canal have been reclaimed as public hiking trails. The vision for the Grey Canal Trail is to create a continuous public trail system following the old canal around the entire valley from Coldstream to Okanagan Lake.

This month we'll focus on the Silver Star Foothills section of the Grey Canal trail.

Silver Star Foothills, Grey Canal Trail

This loop trail is located below the Foothills subdivision. Enjoy panoramic views stretching from Middleton Mountain in the Coldstream Valley, over the City of Vernon, Swan Lake and sweeping north to the Spallumcheen Valley. This circle trail consists of a high trail (1.1 km) and a low trail (1.42 km) with both easy and moderate terrain.

Dogs-on-leash are allowed but please be respectful of other hikers by keeping your canine on leash and using bags provided for pet waste clean-up. Along this wide, packed dirt trail you'll find several benches

offering delightful views as well as interpretive signs explaining the history of the Grey Canal irrigation system.

Two parking lots, one at each end of the loop, provide access to the Silver Star Foothills trail:

- **Blackcomb Way** (at south-east end): follow 48th Avenue east to Silver Star Rd; continue 1.5 km past BX Elementary School; turn left (west) onto Blackcomb Way; watch for parking lot entrance 100 meters on left under hydro lines.

- **Rugg Rd** (at north-west end): follow 48th Avenue east to Silver Star Rd; turn left onto L & A Rd; continue straight (north) past Cools Rd; take first right turn (east) onto Rugg Rd; turn right into the well-marked parking lot.

Next month we'll continue north from Rugg Rd and hike along the **Swan Lake East** section of the Grey Canal trail.

Visit the Ribbons of Green Trails Society webpage at www.ribbonsofgreen.ca for more information.

Happy trails!

Ingrid Neumann, Claude Rioux

Ribbons of Green Trails Society directors



Hikers enjoy the views along the Silver Star Foothills section of the Grey Canal Trail.