

July 6th, 2025



To:

The Honourable Ravi Parmar
Minister of Forests
PO Box 9049, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

The Honourable Randene Neill
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
PO Box 9060, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

RE: Urgent Concern Regarding the Columbia Western Rail Trail

Dear Ministers Parmar & Neill,

I am writing on behalf of the **Quad Riders ATV Association of British Columbia (ATVBC)** to express our deep concern over the recent developments affecting the Columbia Western Rail Trail (CWRT)—specifically the section between Castlegar and Christina Lake that was disestablished as a recreation trail in 2019 and has since been reclassified as “wilderness status.”

As a provincial organization representing more than 5,000 members and 40 clubs, many in rural and tourism-dependent regions, we view the CWRT as a vital piece of multi-use recreation infrastructure. The decision to remove this section from the Recreation Sites and Trails BC network, combined with the lack of planning, maintenance, or meaningful public engagement, directly contradicts previous commitments made by the Province in 2019.

This change is not a neutral status update—it is, effectively, a **disinvestment in rural trail systems** that serve thousands of British Columbians and contribute to local economies. The CWRT is a key component of BC’s outdoor recreation landscape, and its degradation threatens not only recreational access, but also tourism, community wellness, and local volunteer engagement.

We respectfully call on your ministries to:

1. **Reinstate the Province’s role in maintaining and managing the CWRT**, with particular focus on the safety and integrity of trestles, tunnels, and high-use segments;
2. **Undertake engineering assessments and develop a restoration plan**, with full transparency and updates shared with affected communities;
3. **Engage stakeholders**, including rural municipalities, tourism groups, and recreation organizations like ATVBC, in co-developing a sustainable management model;
4. **Avoid further closures or deactivation** of critical access points until meaningful dialogue has occurred.

Trail stewardship must not be abandoned in the face of complexity. If the Province can mobilize resources for infrastructure like the Othello Tunnels, it must apply the same commitment to the CWRT—especially when the affected regions have fewer resources and greater need for provincial partnership.

ATVBC is committed to working with all levels of government, communities, and user groups to ensure continued, safe, and responsible access to British Columbia's trails. We urge you to act now to prevent the permanent loss of this important corridor.

Sincerely,



Kristin Parsons

Executive Director

Quad Riders ATV Association of BC (ATVBC)

www.atvbc.ca

CC:

MOF Deputy Ministry, Makenzie Leine
WLRS Deputy Minister, Lori Halls
District Manager, Selkirk Resource District
Director, Authorizations – Kootenay Boundary Region
Grand Forks ATV Club
Salmo Valley ATV Club
Greenwood Boundary ATV Club