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Measuring Up Committee member Len Knight, CRD Measuring Up Coordinator Kary Fell, Pat Harris from the BC Paraplegic Association, and Area J CRD Director Alex Bracewell cut the ribbon to open the new wheelchair accessible trails in Tatlayoko.

Cariboo Regional District photo

## New accessible Tatlayoko trails opened

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The Tatlayoko Lakeside Community Recreation site came alive at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 9 on schedule.

The occasion was the first grand opening of any of the Measuring Up the North projects.

It consisted of a multi-use trail system designed specifically for wheelchair and low mobility accessibility.

Visionary and project manager Alex Bracewell pounded the post for the trail sign as the vehicle arrived bearing the Measuring Up the North reps Laurie Ringaert, director, and her wheelchair-bound co-worker Pat Harris of the Paraplegic Association of B.C., who drove down from Prince George.

After four days of searing sunshine a serious storm moved in Friday night. At 1 p.m Saturday guests and neighbours arrived midst pelting rain to seek shelter under the roomy pavilion roof.

Then our predictable wind took over, cleared the sky, and restored the fabulous view of Tatlayoko Lake and its bordering snow-spotted peaks of the Coast Range.

A variety of salads with drinks were provided by local ladies Gail McIntyre, Sabina Harris, Loralee Sutton, and Joanna Knight, who also made (in her spare time) a beautiful Tatlayoko Trails cake which was handed out by Kary Fell, a local family friend who is the Cariboo Regional District co-ordinator for the Tatlayoko Measuring Up Committee.

Dorothy Evens was hired to cater the hot beef dip, enjoyed by all, especially those who had come from afar: Cariboo Regional District Area K Director Rick Mumford and wife Kathy; Darron Campbell and Heidi Frank of the CRD; George and Gloria Atamanenko of the Heritage Society; Ubill and Julianna Lulua and friends from Nemiah; and a host of interested guests. Mike King of Whitesaddle Air arrived in his helicopter and took pictures from the air.

Alex Bracewell addressed the crowd of nearly 80 with specific information on what went on over the past three weeks, and why, while the sunshine reflected off a network of glistening, black, smooth conveyer belting trails fanning out from the pavilion in several directions, providing routes across our sizable recreation site, already being put to use by youngsters on roller blades, small scooters and mothers with strollers. During this time Marty Moore gave a photo and oral presentation of the first uses on the site, including Bill Graham's sawmill through to when Lignum Ltd. sawmill burned down.

Alex briefly explained his vision of seeing 210 kilometres by 2010 of this history-making project completed throughout the Cariboo-Chilcotin for a ceremonial ribbon cutting during the opening of the Paralympic games. It is the first regional multi-use, wheelchair trail network in the world.

All of our own Measuring Up committee members put their own commitments, haying etc. on hold to devote their time exclusively to this project — three weeks of 12 to 14 hour days.

Engineering committee members Alex Bracewell and his brother Barry Moore did a double take at the 38,000 pound rolls of belting, donated by Gibraltar Mine, which arrived on a "B" train — two at a time — by B&J Trucking, which was also donated by the mine.

They realized they would have to invent equipment to facilitate the unrolling and positioning of these huge monsters. They scrounged the necessary parts, shafts from the neighbours which had to be welded together to go all the way through, pipe big enough to act as bearings, motor frames which came from the original mill, as side guards, hauling the dispenser to and from the recreation site to Bracewell's shop, on Harris's hay wagon as it kept getting modified. Finally with burner plate from the old Lignum mill as rub plates on the inside (four boxes of welding rod later), it finally began to track in a relatively straight line. At roll number 5 the modified roll dispenser became so fine-tuned that they could manage to unroll the 38,000 pound roll in an hour and a half.

Our Measuring Up Committee members Len and Joanna Knight had been busy from day 1, building 10 picnic tables and an accessible ramp to the concession stand with Dale Langford from Lac La Hache, who stopped by to lend a hand. Stu Spec was approached to supply the wood for park benches from Bella Coola and Darron Mason offered his metal workshop and time to help Len and Jo manufacture the bases. Joanna did all the grinding, polishing and first coat of painting. The benches were assembled on site by Len, Dee Gano, dad Bernie and mom Swede, who helped with the second coat of painting, oiling the wood and pouring the cement pads. Swede took the broom and swept off this ribbon of belting, wanting it to be a pleasant surprise to the users. Junior members Aaron Bracewell and Michael Moore held up their end raking rocks from the trail bed, cutting the belting in place and being the runners for the parts needed. Gramma Gerry made early breakfasts, packed lunches and had supper prepared for the bone - weary entrepreneurs, determined to meet the deadline.

All local labour by the Measuring Up Committee was donated, working with a budget of \$7,500 donated by the Measuring Up the North. Purchasing plywood, screws, cut-off blades (one per cut) , cement and a

wheelchair accessible outhouse, it didn't take long to use it up.


Dave Clark donated his tractor and paired with Harris's post pounder and cement mixer added the finishing touches. Wolf Kaessler donated his backhoe for installing the culvert and outhouse and his mower to tidy the yards. Ken Dyck of Interior Roads was generous in donating the packer with Sam Mason as operator for the day to pack the routes and saved the project time with a bit of diesel from his tidy tank to keep the 950 loader running, as it was an integral part of the whole project.

The relief felt by the members when the whole project was given a thumbs up by Pat Harris and Kary Fell, who toured the route with their wheelchairs, was overwhelming, and it was impossible to wipe the smiles from their faces. As Alex said, "Breaching barriers has been a family tradition."

This has proven a theory, lets get on with it!

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