LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES

LANDSCAPES PAYSAGES

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN CANADA

L'ARCHITECTURE DE PAYSAGE AU CANADA

Fall | Automne 2026
vol.28_no.3 | 8.00$

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS | L'ASSOCIATION DES ARCHITECTES PAYSAGISTES DU CANADA

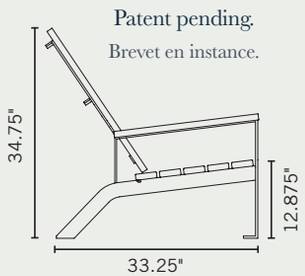


trails + tribulations
sentiers + tribulations

www.csla-aapc.ca

VOL.28_NO.3





Patent pending.
Brevet en instance.

2 or 4 ft lengths. Kebony and other sustainable slat options.

Longueur de 2 ou 4 pi. Lattes en Kebony ou autres options durables.

REVERIE COLLECTION

Inspired by the Adirondack, Eva's relaxed pitch, wide arms, and generous seat bring comfort anywhere.

Inspirés du fauteuil Adirondack, l'inclinaison décontractée, les larges accoudoirs et l'assise spacieuse de l'Eva offrent un confort optimal, où que vous soyez.

VICTORSTANLEY.COM

VICTOR STANLEY[MC]

Create a timeless moment.[MC]

EVA LOUNGE



landscapeforms

Endlessly Expressive

Take-Out: Fresh silhouettes unlock expressive new ways to shape connection outdoors.

Designed in collaboration with Rodrigo Torres

Landscape Forms |
A Modern Craft Manufacturer

DESIGN. CULTURE. CRAFT.

STREETLIFE®

Extraordinary
for Landscape Architects

Product: *Rough&Ready Linear Shades and Solid Serif Benches* **Location:** *Ottawa, Canada* **Architect:** *Marietta Ruhland, Ruhland & Associates Ltd.*

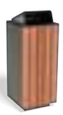
The **Rough&Ready Linear Shades** offer a modular shade solution for public spaces. They can be used to create both straight and angular shade structures. The **Solid Serif Benches** can be equipped with a beautifully designed double backrest that provides excellent ergonomic support. Below is a selection of **new products from the 2026-2027 Collection**, for which greening and durability were among the key design principles guiding this Collection.



Solid Meet&Grow



Solid Sofa Bench



Box Bin Wood



Lean Green Circular Bench *and Wild Grass Pillar*



Drifter Seat

STREETLIFE CANADA Inc canada@streetlife.com | www.streetlife.com | t. 484 496 8281 | FSC® License number: C105477 Streetlife BV streetlifedesign



landscape structures

Play is life-changing

We transform the landscape of play. Our commitment is driven by the belief that play, when designed for everyone, brings out the best in all of us.

Because play, in its magical simplicity, makes us who we are.

To learn more visit us at
playlsi.com/play-is-life-changing

©2025 Landscape Structures Inc. All rights reserved.

LANDSCAPES PAYSAGES

www.csla-aapc.ca

Editorial Board | Comité de rédaction :
Ryan Wakshinski, Chair/président, MALA, CSLA/AAPC
Cameron DeLong, NuALA, FCSLA/FAAPC,
Board Representative | Représentant du CA
Kris Fox, AALA, CSLA/AAPC
Matt Williams, AALA, CSLA/AAPC
Iseult Séguin-Aubé, AAPQ, CSLA/AAPC
Lucas Conan, AAPC, CSLA/AAPC
Blake Creamer, APALA, CSLA/AAPC
Kevin Fraser, BCSLA, CSLA/AAPC
Maren McBride, BCSLA, CSLA/AAPC, ASLA
Taylor LaRocque, MALA, CSLA/AAPC
Heidi Redman, NuALA, CSLA/AAPC
Timothy Bailey Edwards, NWTALA Associate/stagiaire
Cindi Rowan, OALA, CSLA/AAPC
Victoria Taylor, OALA, CSLA/AAPC
Faye Langmaid, SALA, FCSLA/FAAPC, MCIP
Kyla Tulloch-Kowula, SALA, CSLA/AAPC
Hayden Poehl + Sam Redvers, Student Interns | Étudiants stagiaires

CSLA Board of Directors | Conseil d'administration de l'AAPC :
Michael Magnan, AALA, CSLA/AAPC, President | Président
Sophie Beaudoin, AAPQ, FCSLA/FAAPC, President-Elect | Présidente élue
Matthew Mills, APALA, CSLA, MCIP, Past President | Président sortant
Jane Welsh, OALA, FCSLA/FAAPC, Chair, Finance and Risk Management Committee | Présidente, Comité des finances et de la gestion des risques
Andrea Kennedy, AALA, MALA, SALA, CSLA/AAPC
Tracey Hesse, AAPQ, CSLA/AAPC
Sue Sirrs, APALA, CSLA/AAPC
Teri Cantin, BCSLA, CSLA/AAPC
Darcy Granove, MALA, CSLA/AAPC
Naomi Ratte, NuALA, CSLA/AAPC
Margaret Ferguson, NWTALA, FCSLA/FAAPC
Steve Barnhart, OALA, CSLA/AAPC
Brad Wilson, SALA, CSLA/AAPC

CSLA Staff | Personnel de l'AAPC
Michelle Legault, Executive Director | Directrice générale | executive-director@csla-aapc.ca
Hope Parnham, Manager, Advocacy and Strategic Affairs | Gestionnaire de la promotion et des affaires stratégiques | advocacy@csla-aapc.ca
Katherine Velluso, Officer, Awards,Honors and Events | Agente, prix, honneurs et événements | awards@csla-aapc.ca
Rebecca Riordon, Coordinator, Communications and Special Projects | Coordonnatrice, communications et projets spéciaux | coordinator@csla-aapc.ca

Translation | Traduction :
Christian Caron | tcmcaron@pm.me
Matthew Sendbuehler | letraducteur@gmail.com

Editor | Rédactrice : Laurie J. Blake

Published by | Publié par :

NAYLOR
ASSOCIATION SOLUTIONS

200-1200 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0T5
Tel: 204.947.0222 | Fax: 204.947.2047 | www.naylor.com

Publisher | Éditeur : Lana Taylor

Naylor Editor | Rédactrice Naylor : Jen Lipner

Layout & Design | Mise en page et conception graphique : Emma Law

©2026 Naylor (Canada) Inc. All rights reserved. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced by any means, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Naylor (Canada) Inc., Distribution Dept., 200-1200 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0T5

Canadian Publication Agreement #40064978
PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2026/CSL-Q0326



PART OF INSTALLED STAIR SYSTEM, DINOSAUR PROVINCIAL PARK, ALBERTA
PHOTO 02



TRAILS + | SENTIERS + TRIBULATIONS

10 | TO BEGIN WITH | POUR COMMENCER
TRAIL BUILDING | AMÉNAGEMENT DE SENTIERS
Patrick Beech + Daniel Scott,
Guest Editors | Rédacteurs invités

PROLOGUE

18 | A Fond Farewell to Michelle Legault, compiled by Ryan Wakshinski

20 | Designed vs. Desired Paths & Trails, Jenna Frizzell

21 | Hot Take – Uncovering Geosynthetic Fallacies, Daniel Scott

FOCUS | FOCUS

26 | PARTNERSHIPS + PLANNING BUILD MOUNT MAHONY TRAILS
FR_LP+ PARTENARIATS + AMÉNAGEMENT DES SENTIERS DU MONT MAHONY
Patrick Beech

28 | MORE THAN A TRAIL
Stewardship, Climate Change and Connection in Kugluktuk
FR_LP+ PLUS QU'UN SIMPLE SENTIER
Intendance, changement climatique et connexion à Kugluktuk
Cameron DeLong

32 | LE GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST : VECTEUR IDENTITAIRE DU GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST | THE GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST: IDENTITY ACROSS A VAST TERRITORY
Josiane Roy

40 | PLACE TO PLACE, PERSON TO PERSON
Collaborating to Build Connection Along the Northgate Trail Network
FR_LP+ D'UN LIEU À L'AUTRE, D'UNE PERSONNE À L'AUTRE
Collaborer pour tisser des liens le long du réseau de sentiers Northgate
Alex Man

44 | UP, DOWN AND ALL AROUND
The Trails of Dinosaur Provincial Park
FR_LP+ EN HAUT, EN BAS ET TOUT AUTOUR
Les sentiers du parc provincial Dinosaur
Matt Williams

48 | HOPE AFTER DEVASTATION
Planning a Resilient Trail Network at Grand Bay West
FR_LP+ L'ESPOIR APRÈS LA DESTRUCTION
Concevoir un Réseau de Sentiers Résilient à Grand Bay West
Rachael Fitkowski

52 | SHARED TRAILS, DIFFERENT STORIES
FR_LP+ UN SENTIER, DEUX RÉCITS
Leila Todd + Ted Uhrich

56 | MEEWASIN'S UNIQUE TRAIL AMENITIES
FR_LP+ LES ATTRAITS DES SENTIERS DE MEEWASIN
Alan Otterbein

58 | KINA8AT'S FIL ROUGE TRAIL
FR_LP+ LE SENTIER FIL ROUGE DE KINA8AT
Peter Soland

62 | IMPROVING STEEP TRAILS IN GROUSE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK
FR_LP+ AMÉLIORATION DES SENTIERS ESCARPÉS DU PARC RÉGIONAL GROUSE MOUNTAIN
Pascale Rozada

FORUM

66 | landADAPT: BUILDING A CLIMATE-READY PROFESSION
Hope Parnham

68 | CRITIQUE
Books on Trails
Compiled by Patrick Beech, Daniel Scott + Kevin Fraser

70 | MENTORSHIP MOMENT | MOMENT DE MENTORAT
Daniel Glenn – Stewarding Relationships
Blake Creamer

78 | PARTING SHOT | DERNIER MOT
The Landscape Architect as Trail Conductor
Kristina Patterson

LP+ ONLINE | EN LIGNE

NEW | NOUVEAUTÉS
Submit for the 2027 NUDA | Soumettez pour les Prix nationaux de design urbain 2027
TRANSLATIONS | TRADUCTIONS
>FR_LP+ | VERSION FRANÇAIS

COVER | COUVERTURE STAIRS + LADDERS, DINOSAUR PROVINCIAL PARK, ALBERTA
PHOTO 02



Commercial is in our DNA.

Unilock has been partnering with designers on their commercial hardscaping projects since 1972. Over that time, we've advanced our products and support to align with the evolving needs of design. Today, Unilock offers an expanded product portfolio and a simplified specification process, offering more creative freedom than ever before.

UNILOCK®

commercial.unilock.com

SHADEVIEW®







BRING YOUR VISION TO LIFE

15-year warranty. Maintenance-free.

Shadeview® Structures' unique modular system lets you customize your structure's size, style, and finishes to fit your design and budget so you can bring your vision to life.

PAVILIONS | PERGOLAS | SAILS | ARTSHADES™

Spec today at **shadeview.com**

905.648.2229 | 1.855.449.4445 | sales@shadeview.com

SHADEVIEW® STRUCTURES

upcoming issues

spring 27 | northwards
deadline November 16

summer 27 | excellence
deadline April 2

prochains numéros

printemps 27 | vers le nord
date de tombée 16 novembre

été 27 | excellence
date de tombée 2 avril

For submission guidelines | Pour connaître les normes rédactionnelles :
Laurie J. Blake, Editor | Rédactrice
lp@csla-aapc.ca

LANDSCAPES | *PAYSAGES* is published by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects to provide a national platform for the exchange of ideas related to the profession. The views expressed in *LANDSCAPES* | *PAYSAGES* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CSLA. Guest editors and contributors are volunteers, and article proposals are encouraged. Articles may be submitted in either English or French.

LANDSCAPES | *PAYSAGES* acknowledges that the head office of the CSLA is in unceded Algonquin, Anishinabe territory, and that this magazine is developed, distributed, read and enjoyed by people from coast to coast to coast, on the lands of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people and their governments. On behalf of L|P magazine and the members of the CSLA, we are thankful to work and live on these lands. We recognize the harms inflicted on Indigenous peoples by colonialism and the residential school system and we are all working to reconcile the damage done.

LANDSCAPES | *PAYSAGES* est publiée par l'Association des architectes paysagistes du Canada pour servir de plate-forme nationale destinée à l'échange d'idées sur la profession. Les opinions exprimées dans *LANDSCAPES* | *PAYSAGES* appartiennent aux auteurs et ne reflètent pas forcément celles de l'AAPC. Nos rédacteurs invités contribuent bénévolement. Nous attendons, en français ou en anglais, vos propositions d'articles.

LANDSCAPES | *PAYSAGES* reconnaît que le siège social de l'AAPC se trouve en territoire Algonquin et Anishinabe non cédé, et que ce magazine est conçu, distribué, lu et apprécié par des gens d'un océan à l'autre, sur les terres des Premières nations, des Inuits et des Métis et de leurs gouvernements. Au nom du magazine L|P et des membres de l'AAPC, nous sommes reconnaissants de travailler et de vivre sur ces terres. Nous reconnaissons les préjudices infligés aux peuples autochtones par le colonialisme et le système des pensionnats, et nous nous efforçons tous de réparer les dommages causés.

***LANDSCAPES* | *PAYSAGES* is printed with vegetable-based inks and on recycled paper stock.**
***LANDSCAPES* | *PAYSAGES* est imprimée sur papier recyclé et en utilisant des encres d'origine végétale.**



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE TRAIL, MOUNT MAHONY, NEAR POWELL RIVER, BC
PHOTO MARGUS RIGA

PATRICK BEECH + DANIEL SCOTT
GUEST EDITORS | RÉDACTEUR INVITÉS

TRAIL BUILDING | AMÉNAGEMENT DE SENTIERS

"DO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS DO TRAILS?" Co-guest editor Patrick Beech was recently asked this question by a group of MLA students during a presentation on one of his firm's projects. They were intrigued, but also skeptical. Trails are seldom emphasized in landscape architecture courses. At their most elemental, trails can arise organically, tracing repeatedly travelled routes, without formal planning or design intervention. Yet, as the stories in this issue demonstrate, trails can also be complex, meaningful projects that ask a great deal of landscape architects.

The contributions received for this issue show that trails are inseparable from some of the most urgent questions facing communities today. Several articles illustrate the impacts climate change is already having on trail systems. Rachael Fitkowski describes how landscape architects are helping communities navigate the difficult questions that arise when rebuilding after disaster. Cameron DeLong's story of the Kugluktuk trail makes visible the impacts of a warming Arctic, while also presenting the trail as an expression of stewardship and living history.

Other pieces reveal the logistical and ethical challenges of inviting people into remarkable but sensitive places. Matt Williams developed a creative, "kit-of-parts" approach to prevent visitors to Dinosaur Provincial Park from "loving a beautifully fragile landscape to death." Co-guest editor Daniel Scott opines on the incongruity of synthetics in cherished natural landscapes. Pascale Rozado describes the complexity of providing trail experiences in Metro Vancouver's mountainous terrain. In the Parting Shot, Kristina Patterson reminds us that landscape architects are often at their best when proposing light-touch solutions – and when asking the right questions before rushing toward answers.

Another thread running through this issue is personal connection. Trails are not only lines on a map or a way up a mountain; they are places where memories are created, connections are made and identities are formed. Leila Todd and Ted Ulrich's conversation makes this especially clear, as they reflect on how early-life experiences continue to shape their perspectives on trails. Alex Mann's story offers a different kind of connection, showing how dedication to the Northgate project went on to shape his personal life. In Patrick Beech's article, community relationships become the foundation for a new network of trails on Mount Mahony.

Finally, the stories collected here show that trails themselves can be storytellers. They can carry cultural knowledge, reveal environmental change, make histories legible and invite different ways of moving through and understanding land. Peter Soland's article on Kina8at, for example, considers how trails can express Indigenous philosophies and relationships to place.

So, do landscape architects do trails? Of course! Although, perhaps not always in the ways one might first imagine. Trail design must consider alignments, surfaces, signage and amenities, but also relationships: between people and place, between access and protection and between memory and change. Taken together, the articles in this issue show trails as modest forms with considerable complexity, serving as pathways for stories to travel from one generation to the next. **LP**

« LES ARCHITECTES PAYSAGISTES CONÇOIVENT-ILS DES SENTIERS? » C'est la question que Patrick Beech, corédacteur invité, s'est fait poser par un groupe d'étudiants (M.A.P.) lors d'une présentation de son cabinet. Ils étaient intrigués, mais sceptiques, car le programme met peu emphase sur les sentiers. Les sentiers, dans leur forme la plus élémentaire, apparaissent naturellement, le long d'itinéraires forgés au fil du temps, sans planification ni intervention formelle. Pourtant, comme vous le verrez dans le présent numéro, les sentiers sont parfois des projets complexes et porteurs de sens qui exigent beaucoup des architectes paysagistes.

Vous comprendrez à quel point les sentiers sont indissociables des enjeux socioécologiques des municipalités. Plusieurs articles traitent des impacts actuels des changements climatiques sur les réseaux de sentiers. Rachael Fitkowski nous explique que les architectes paysagistes conseillent les villes en matière de reconstruction après sinistre. L'article de Cameron DeLong sur le sentier Kugluktuk souligne l'impact du réchauffement de l'Arctique tout en nous présentant le sentier comme une expression de la gestion responsable et de l'histoire vivante.

Certains articles traitent des défis logistiques et éthiques de l'accès public aux lieux remarquables, mais fragiles. Matt Williams a développé une approche créative, modulaire, pour éviter que les visiteurs du parc provincial Dinosaur ne le « détériorent à force d'aimer ses paysages d'une beauté fragile ». Daniel Scott, corédacteur invité, s'interroge sur l'incongruité des matériaux synthétiques dans les paysages naturels prisés. Pascale Rozado décrit la complexité de l'aménagement des sentiers dans le relief montagneux du Grand Vancouver. Dans l'épilogue, Kristina Patterson nous rappelle que le génie des architectes paysagistes repose souvent sur des interventions « légères », et sur la capacité de poser les bonnes questions.

Autre thème récurrent du numéro, la connexion personnelle. Les sentiers ne sont pas de simples lignes sur une carte ou un moyen de gravir une montagne. Ce sont des lieux où naissent des souvenirs, où se tissent des liens, où se forgent des identités. Leila Todd et Ted Ulrich l'illustrent fort bien, alors qu'ils réfléchissent à leurs expériences d'enfance qui continuent de façonner leur vision des sentiers. Tandis que Alex Mann nous propose un lien plus intrinsèque à son projet Northgate qui a marqué sa vie personnelle. Alors que Patrick Beech traite des relations communautaires au cœur d'un nouveau réseau de sentiers sur le mont Mahony.

Vous prendrez conscience, à la lecture des articles, que les sentiers sont eux-mêmes porteurs d'histoires. Leur rôle est de transmettre un savoir culturel, de révéler les changements environnementaux et de promouvoir de nouvelles façons de parcourir et de comprendre le territoire. L'article de Peter Soland sur Kina8at examine comment les sentiers expriment la philosophie autochtone et la relation au territoire.

Alors, les architectes conçoivent-ils des sentiers? Bien sûr! Même si ce n'est pas comme on l'imagine. La conception des sentiers doit tenir compte du tracé, du revêtement, de la signalisation et des aménagements, mais aussi de la relation entre la personne et le lieu, le libre accès et la protection, la mémoire et le devenir. Dans son ensemble, le numéro présente les sentiers comme des aménagements certes modestes, mais d'une grande complexité. Des voies qui propagent les récits d'une génération à l'autre. **LP**

IRONSMITH

Leadership by design

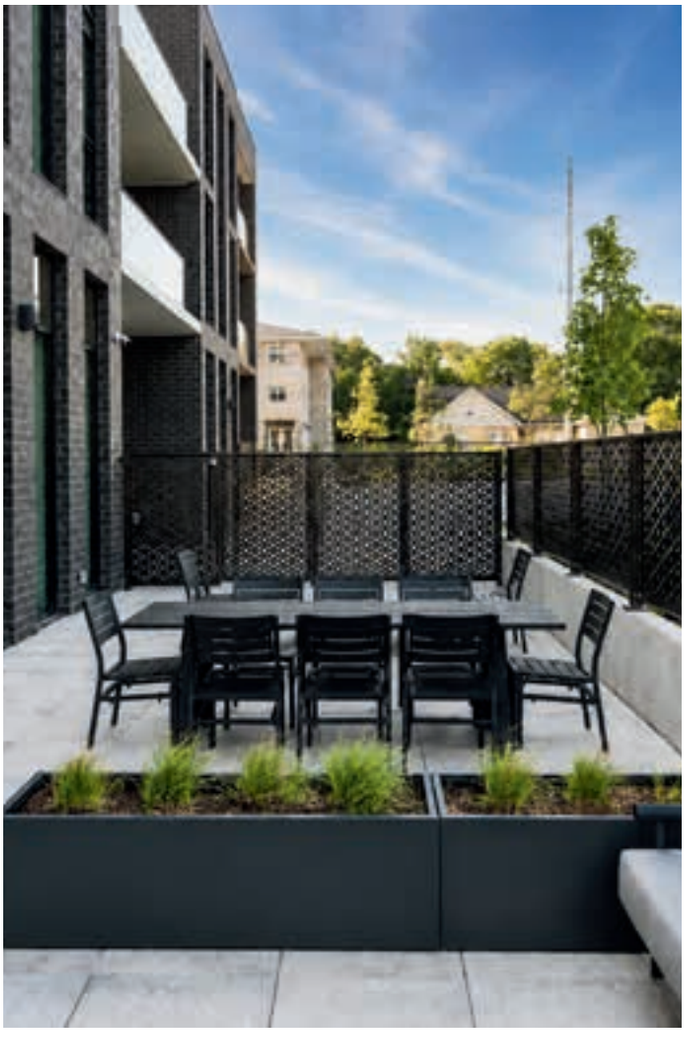
Paver-Grate®

More than meets the eye.

IRONSMITH's Paver-Grate® suspended paver system lets you design over –instead of around— tree areas for optimized planting, tree health and pedestrian comfort. An excellent choice for urban areas, the Paver-Grate® system seamlessly provides root space without impeding on pedestrian walk areas. Paver-Grate® tree grates can be specified in standard or custom sizes with or without opening's. Trim rings and integrated tree grates available in multiple styles.



For more information about all IRONSMITH products visit us online at, **www.ironsmith.biz** or call, 760-776-5077.



Elevating Outdoor Spaces

to stand the test of time

HAUSER
SITE FURNITURE





The Carrick/GSP Group

www.hausersite.com | 800-268-7328 | sales@hausersite.com

OUR GUEST EDITORS | NOTRE RÉDACTEUR INVITÉES



PATRICK BEECH

Patrick Beech, MBCSLA, CSLA, is a second-generation landscape architect based in Vancouver, BC. As a senior landscape architect at LEES+Associates, he works on trail, park and other planning and design projects throughout BC. He is grateful that this allows him to work in many beautiful settings and collaborate with many passionate people. A lifelong outdoors person, lately he spends his time on the trails walking slowly and collecting rocks and sticks with his two-year-old daughter.



DANIEL SCOTT

Daniel Scott, BLA, is a trail professional based in Victoria, BC. With a career focused on all manner of recreational trails across non-profit, for-profit, academic and government sectors he has spent this past year working as the director of trails and trail infrastructure for the Province of BC's Conservation and Recreation Division, overseeing the development of trail policy, standards and operational project delivery by day and working as a consultant for clients across Canada on evenings and weekends. Once the workday is done, he is more often than not to be found on trails either riding one type of bicycle or another or walking his dog, Khan.

OUR WRITERS | NOS COLLABORATEURS



CAMERON DELONG

Cameron DeLong, NuALA, FCSLA, is a landscape architect based in Iqaluit, NU. He is the director of Nunavut's Climate Change Secretariat and serves on the board of directors for the NuALA and CSLA. He has also served as a member of *Landscapes | Paysages* editorial board.



JOSIANE ROY

Josiane Roy, AAPQ, CSLA, est architecte paysagiste chez Lemay, à Montréal. Ses projets cherchent à révéler ce que les paysages urbains portent en eux : leurs strates historiques, leurs dynamiques naturelles, leur potentiel de résilience. Le Grand parc de l'Ouest, qu'elle accompagne depuis ses premières phases, est pour elle un terrain d'exploration autant qu'un engagement. | Josiane Roy is a landscape architect at Lemay, based in Montréal. Her projects seek to reveal what urban landscapes hold within them, from historical layers and natural dynamics to their capacity for resilience. The Grand parc de l'Ouest, which she has worked on since its earliest phases, is for her as much a field of exploration as a personal commitment.



ALEX MAN

Alex Man, PhD, PEng, is a trail designer and geological engineer at Scatliff + Miller + Murray. For over 20 years, Alex has combined his passion for outdoor recreation and background in engineering into a career of designing and building multi-use trails that safely and sustainably maximize user experience.



MATT WILLIAMS

Matt Williams, MLA, BES, AALA, CSLA, is a principal at O2, leading the firm's landscape architecture practice and has considerable experience managing high-profile urban design, mixed-use, campus, facility and large park projects. Matt's work emphasizes the development of multi-functional landscapes and public spaces that meet both the cultural and ecological needs of a site. He is a past president of the Alberta Association of Landscape Architects and currently sits on the *Landscapes* | *Paysages* editorial board.



PETER SOLAND

Peter Soland, AAPQ, AALA, CSLA, is a founding partner, urban designer, landscape architect and architect at civiliti. He is a thinker and designer of cities, public spaces and landscapes with over 25 years of experience. A tireless walker and observer, Peter roots his work in an approach to urban and natural landscapes where context, history and identity inspire designs that foster new contemporary meanings and public use. He is an experienced multidisciplinary team coordinator who communicates with the skill and clarity required to lead large-scale urban projects. Many of the projects he has designed and directed have won awards in Canada and abroad.



RACHAEL FITKOWSKI

Rachael Fitkowski, APALA, CSLA, is a "Come from Away" who landed in Newfoundland over a decade ago. Through her work at Mills & Wright Landscape Architecture, she has helped realize a variety of trail plans that bring people closer to the province's special natural landscapes. Originally from southern Ontario, Rachael relocated to Newfoundland after graduating with a BLA from the University of Guelph in 2013. As an outdoor enthusiast, she was drawn to the wild and captivating landscapes of Newfoundland and Labrador. Over a decade later, she is still awestruck by its natural beauty.



PASCALE ROZADA

Pascale Rozada, RLA, BCSLA, lives in Vancouver and works for Metro Vancouver Regional Parks. Pascale enjoys the region with her family with the abundant access to nature. From cross country ski trails or backcountry hiking, they enjoy taking a respite from their busy day-to-day lives and be in nature.



ALAN OTTERBEIN

Alan Otterbein, SALA, CSLA, is a landscape architect and the director of development at the Meewasin Valley Authority. He has lived and worked in Saskatoon for over 25 years and has been involved in the planning and development of public realm projects both with the City of Saskatoon and Meewasin. His landscape design and construction experience spans 40 years, in multiple locations across western Canada. Since starting his role at Meewasin in 2013, his focus has been on site master planning and expanding and enhancing Meewasin's popular trail network. Besides building trails, he enjoys biking and walking them regularly with his family.

ERRATUM

In our Summer 2026 issue, the French photo credits, on page 59, were not updated. They should read:

PHOTO 1 LUC DIPIETRO (@LUCDIPIETRO_PHOTO)
2-5 PWL PARTNERSHIP LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC. & BRETT RYAN STUDIOS.

GLADE (shading)



Designed by
Allan Hagerup

GLADE defines space with a clear, architectural form. A modern pergola that brings structure, scale, and shade to public environments. Simple, precise, and made to integrate seamlessly into any context.

vestre

vestre.com

GreenTheory™

PATH SYSTEM



Versatile and aesthetic, the Path System's customizability includes a range of bench shapes, angles, and radii, each manufactured from marine-grade aluminum and thermally modified ash, as well as leg and armrest options. Sectional freestanding and connected seating options available.

P-C, P-FS - Path System
Variable Angles and Radii
Variable Lengths x 18" W x 36" H
5052 Aluminum
Thermally Modified Ash

greentheory.com

PROLOGUE

01_A FOND FAREWELL TO MICHELLE LEGAULT

COMPILED BY RYAN WAKSHINSKI

"There is no happiness like that of being loved by your fellow creatures and feeling that your presence is an addition to their comfort."
*– **Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre***



1

EN_
THERE IS NOTHING more compelling to write about a leader than when you say they have been made an honorary member of the organization they are heading. This tribute at the 2025 CSLA Congress in Ottawa says so much about CSLA's retiring executive director, Michelle Legault.

In discussing this farewell to Michelle, who has so ably served the CSLA for the past 14 years, we realized a traditional career retrospective could easily eat up half the magazine. So, we decided to let the people who know her best provide personal memories of collaborating with her to guide the CSLA through a tremendously successful period of growth for landscape architects and landscape architecture in Canada. Thank you, farewell and enjoy your family and retirement, Michelle! (Although, since you are still onboard with the LACF, we know you won't be that far away!)

"The stage was set for a CSLA Board meeting with a prepared table (pens, water, paper, agenda) along with breakfast (including coffee and tea!) on the sideboard. She walked through the room with a big smile: pert, petite, perfectly coiffed with a colourful scarf tied just so around her neck. Professional. It was my first time meeting Michelle Legault, and my confidence in the CSLA's future was elevated as the meeting progressed. We have been well looked after and met the challenges of a growing profession with aplomb. Michelle lived up to my and the CSLA's expectations over the years she has worked with us, and beyond." | **Carol Craig, CLSA President 2014–15**



2

"Thanks to Michelle, I was able to do leadership rather than operational tasks. Having a full-time executive director (combined with Michelle!!), allowed the board to shift from dealing with trivial things that keep an organization healthy, to bigger things that allow growth. Starting with her sifting through our archives, already possessing the right level of extroversion for landscape architects, and combined with her emotional intelligence, a beautiful outcome is that Michelle knows us. We're lucky she interacted with us in a way that showed commitment and heart and made us feel included and special. I hope she feels the reward of being involved with people who appreciate her to the ends of the earth and back. Saying she left us better off would be an extreme understatement. Our presidents and boards have led the CSLA through an amazing 14 years of organizational growth. I can confidently say Michelle's presence was a huge factor in our success. She's leaving us completely re-shaped, organizationally vibrant and ready for the next phase of growth. I hope it was a great job for her to have." | **Peter Briggs, CSLA President 2013–14**

"I had the pleasure of hosting Michelle at my home last summer when she was in Montréal for a meeting with AAPQ.... I organized a dinner at home with Peter and Ellen Jacobs, Ron and Sachi Williams, Danièle Routaboule, Malaka Ackaoui (my wife and partner) and myself. We had a wonderful time, with 250 years of practice in LA around the table – many great

discussions! Michelle was so happy, she said the picture we took would become a piece of the CSLA's historical anthology! Her work is more than a job; she always goes beyond what is expected, and her personal skills, politeness and real interest in people made her more than our executive director.... She became our friend!" | **Vincent Asselin, CSLA President 2017–18**

"What has always struck me is the deeply human touch Michelle brings to everything she does. She has a gift for seeing those who haven't yet found their voice and for making space for them to be heard and to contribute. Beyond everything she has given to the CSLA, I am grateful most of all for her friendship." | **Hope Parnham, CSLA Manager, Advocacy and Strategic Affairs, CSLA President 2020-21**

"Like every landscape architect, Michelle saw the full palette before her and shaped the CSLA into a united, modern organization proving that when we work from a shared vision, we can create something greater than ourselves and lift the whole profession together." | **Bob Somers, CSLA President 2023–24**

"I remember a letter we received about a sensitive topic involving important content and diverse perspectives. Michelle sent it to me as president, and I had no idea how to respond. We then had a conversation during which Michelle said, 'the history is "x," the current situation is "y," and I think we should respond by doing "z." It was, of course, perfect.'" | **Catherine Berris, CSLA President 2024–25**

"Working closely with Michelle over the last five years, I've learned a tremendous amount from her and will always value her leadership. She leads with empathy and genuine care for people, and her passion for the profession shows up in everything she does. She also has a rare ability to keep the board aligned and focused on what really matters – no small feat. And through it all, Michelle never loses the human side of leadership – hugs included!" | **Michael Magnan, CLSA President 2026–27**

"Michelle often jokes that the CSLA is her 'baby,' and in many ways, she has cared for it with the dedication, patience and commitment of a parent, including occasionally having to wrangle a few toddlers along the way (myself included!). That care shows in what the CSLA has become. Having worked alongside her for many of the past 14 years, I feel fortunate to have witnessed firsthand the growth of our 'association of professionals' into a truly 'professional association.' Her legacy will continue to shape the CSLA for years to come. Thank you, Michelle, for everything you have done for landscape architecture and for all of us who have had the privilege of working with you. Bravo!" | **Matthew Mills, CSLA President 2025–26**

"One of Michelle's strongest qualities is her ability to remain calm during challenging times. Her jovial nature is infectious, and she always displayed a smile no matter what the issue the CSLA might be facing." | **Robert Norman, CSLA President 2015–16**

"Michelle is the epitome of fierce competence delivered with poise and elegance. My best memories of Michelle (other than laughing out loud and celebrating after a job well done!) are from board and committee meetings. When a sensitive topic was being debated, and the passionate group of CSLA volunteers would try to come up with ideas, dissect everything, assess from 16 different angles, etc., the meetings could run away from us. At that moment, invariably, Michelle would raise her hand and say: 'May I make a suggestion?' Every time, I remember sitting back with a smile on my face because I knew that Michelle's suggestion, like waving a magic wand, not only would consider and incorporate the 'greatest hits' of the discussion but also include a clear and responsible path to take forward. Every. Single. Time." | **Nastaran Moradinejad, CSLA President, 2018–19**

"It has been an absolute pleasure to work with and know Michelle. She is highly efficient, incredibly supportive, unflappable, organized and unassuming. She always comes with solutions and has consistently had the best interests of the CSLA at heart, all done with a twinkle in her eye and a tremendous sense of humour. I consider myself tremendously lucky to be able to continue to work with Michelle as she takes on a role supporting the Landscape Architecture Canada Foundation board." | **Gordon Smith, CSLA President 2016-17**

"When I was approached to put my name forward for the CSLA president, my first question was to find out if Michelle would be in the executive director role. I know this was the same question that others before me and after me asked. I worked with Michelle as a volunteer and a colleague, but I gained a friend and trusted advisor who continues to bring joy to my life. Aren't we fortunate that this has been the experience of so many in our profession, just for having the chance to know her?" | **Chris Grosset, CSLA President 2022–23**

"I have never seen anyone as skillful at facilitating meeting discussion to achieve a solid outcome and workable actions going forward as Michelle. Her steadfast, thoughtful approach and cheerful attitude (with a delightful giggle) have gone a long way to bolster CSLA members and to build our national profile over the years. I will always treasure participating in the glamorous Governor General's Medal party together at Rideau Hall. Life comes as a series of journeys, Michelle. Enjoy your next exciting journey!" | **Carolyn Woodland, CSLA President 2021–22**

1 RETIRING CSLA EXEC. DIRECTOR, MICHELLE LEGAULT, CONGRESS 2025 **2** L-R BOB SOMMERS, CATHERINE BERRIS, MICHELLE'S HUSBAND ROBERT CORNEAU, MICHELLE, RYAN WAKSHINSKI + MATTHEW MILLS
PHOTOS 1 DOUG LITTLE **2** RYAN WAKSHINSKI

CSLA WELCOMES MEGAN ANDRE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR |
L'AAPC ACCUEILLE MEGAN ANDRE À TITRE DE DIRECTRICE GÉNÉRALE

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA), I am pleased to announce that following a national search and robust recruitment process, Megan Andre joined the CSLA as our Executive Director, effective September 21, 2026.

Au nom du conseil d'administration de l'Association des architectes paysagistes du Canada (AAPC), j'ai le plaisir de vous annoncer qu'à l'issue d'une recherche à l'échelle nationale et d'un processus de recrutement rigoureux, Megan Andre a accepté de rejoindre l'AAPC en tant que directrice générale à compter du 21 septembre 2026.

Warm Regards | Cordialement,
Michael Magnan, MArch., BCSLA, AALA, OALA, CSLA|AAPC
President, Canadian Society of Landscape Architects |
Président, L'Association des architectes paysagistes du Canada

02_DESIGNED VS. DESIRED PATHS & TRAILS

JENNA FRIZZELL



1



2

EN_

AS LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS, we carefully consider accessibility, safety, views and circulation to create public spaces people want to use, move through and enjoy. Yet despite careful planning, people often move through a space differently than intended.

As landscape designers, we often notice desire paths where others simply see worn grass. To designers, they are clues about how a space is actually being used. These informal trails, known as "desire paths," raise interesting questions, such as: What are desire paths telling us? Why did people create a new path?

Desire paths emerge when people prioritize convenience, efficiency or enjoyment over the originally provided route. For designers, desire paths offer valuable insight into how people naturally move through a space, exposing the disconnect between design intent and user behaviour.

Many campuses and public landscapes have embraced the philosophy of "let the grass grow first, then pave the paths," allowing desire lines to emerge before investing in permanent circulation systems.

With this in mind, should we provide only the most efficient route, or both the functional path and the path of beauty?

We aim to create places that people want to move through, linger in and return to. Sometimes this means prioritizing function over form. A perfectly planned pathway may look successful on paper but, as designers, we must put ourselves in users' shoes to understand and anticipate people's needs.

This idea is particularly relevant in Canada, where movement patterns change dramatically with the seasons. In winter, people often seek the quickest and most efficient route, while in spring and summer, those same users may choose a more scenic route to enjoy the landscape.

Designing successful public spaces means considering year-round use and recognizing that a single path may not satisfy every need.

While desire paths themselves may not be accessible, they help identify where accessible routes should be located and how circulation can better serve all users.

Desire paths also encourage us to rethink conventional circulation. This is very evident in the images above from Ohio State University walkways.

Ultimately, desire paths are more than just shortcuts or signs of poor design. They remind us that the landscape continues to evolve long after construction is complete and offer subtle hints left behind by the people who use our spaces every day. Successful design is not only about shaping space but also about understanding human behaviour to better connect people to place.

By paying attention to where people choose to walk, landscape designers can create spaces that are more intuitive, functional, and responsive to the people who use them.



Jenna Frizzell *is a landscape designer currently working in Prince Edward Island, her "hometown." She is a recent graduate of the Landscape Architecture Program at the University of Guelph. Jenna is interested in pushing the boundaries of the landscape profession, exploring new topics. And, having lived in the UK last year, she has been inspired in many ways to bring ideas and projects into the Canadian profession.*

1,2 THE STORY GOES THAT, BACK IN 1914, OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHITECT JOSEPH N. BRADFORD WAITED PATIENTLY FOR WINTER BEFORE USING A HOT AIR BALLOON TO GET A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE INTRICATE WEB OF CRISS-CROSSING TRAILS STUDENTS HAD CARVED IN THE SNOW. THEIR FINDINGS WERE THEN USED IN THE CONFIGURATION OF THE MORE FORMAL NETWORK OF PAVED WALKWAYS. THE PHOTO ON THE LEFT SHOWCASES BRANDFORD'S FINDINGS; THE ONE ON THE RIGHT FEATURES CURRENT-DAY PATHS.
PHOTOS 1,2 THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

03_HOT TAKE – UNCOVERING GEOSYNTHETIC FALLACIES

DANIEL SCOTT

EN_

OVER THE PAST almost 20 years, I have had the privilege of assessing trail projects in all 10 provinces and across all three major jurisdictional levels (federal, provincial and municipal). In almost every instance, clients have a keen desire to (re)develop these linear features in such a way as to be more sustainable with as little impact on the land base as possible. And yet, in so many cases where aggregate trail surfacing was either observed or prescribed in the repair, the conversation would turn to the inclusion of geosynthetic fabrics with the notion that using them was a requirement.

Please do not mistake this article as one disparaging the merits of geosynthetics within the realm of geotechnical engineering. They certainly have their place in that world and are useful for trails in certain soil conditions. However, somewhere along the way it seems as though they have become automatically coupled with aggregate pathways and trail specifications – with, I would argue, minimal benefit.



2



1

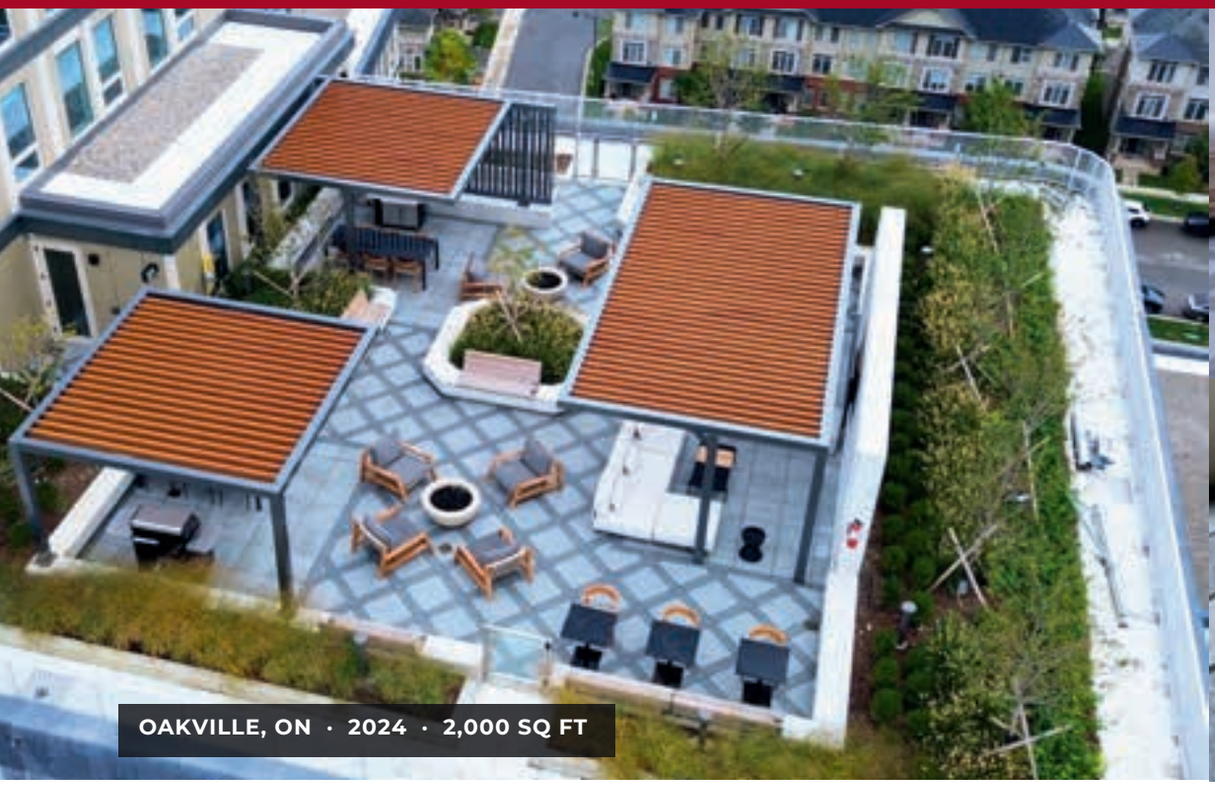
Throughout Canada one can find trails plagued with ratty, torn and exposed geotextile rearing its polymer-based head, a stark counterpoint that they are in fact in a natural environment. Advocates of their use will exclaim "It simply was not installed correctly!" I would argue, in most cases, it being installed at all is incorrect. One can find examples of trails that have weathered hundreds, if not thousands of years of history and held up without the need for this wafer-thin strip of plastic.

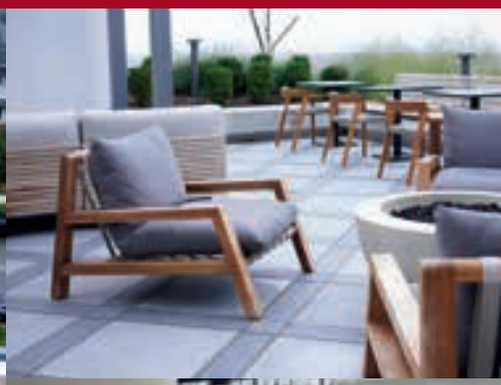
The solution is to lean into good design, understanding the forces being applied to your trail project, then mitigating those forces through seemingly subtle yet impactful shifts in alignment or by manipulating the single digit grade percentages in the ways that landscape architects are trained to do.

The beauty of a well-designed trail that uses only natural materials is that if the trail no longer serves a function, it can be left to nature for reclamation. The same cannot be done with what amounts to plastic bags buried 150 to 300 millimetres below the tread surface. Is the use of synthetics truly the path forward in world already plagued by an overabundance of microplastics? Have any of you had the misfortune of working on a project where you have had to try to pull up 15+-year-old geosynthetic laid over kilometres of well-intentioned trails through ecologically sensitive environments? An exercise in futility.

As we continue to develop new trails for the public to experience, I ask that we reconsider the seemingly default inclusive status geosynthetics has established. Instead, let's invest in a future where we are not actively adding more garbage to our most coveted natural spaces under misguided notions of durability and so-called sustainability. Rather, I challenge us all to champion good design over product panaceas. **LP**

1,2 EXAMPLES TAKEN IN LATE SUMMER OF 2026 COAST TO COAST (1-BC; 2-NS)
PHOTOS DANIEL SCOTT







CASE STUDY · COMMERCIAL ROOFTOP · LARGE-FORMAT PORCELAIN

PORCEA STONE, SPECIFIED. ROMEX SYSTEM, GUARANTEED.

Large-format Porcea porcelain on a rooftop terrace. Bonded to resist wind lift, and permeable so rainwater drains through the joints rather than across the surface.

High above Trafalgar Road in Oakville, Branthaven set out to give residents a refined rooftop retreat. NAK Design Strategies specified large-format **Porcea Tundra** and **Porcea Black Opal** porcelain from **Porcea Stone**, laid as a rotated grid pattern with contrasting inlay tiles. Supporting the Porcea porcelain tiles as the base and setting system is a complete **ROMEX® System Guarantee assembly**, engineered for a rooftop where weight, drainage, freeze-thaw, and wind lift concerns all demanded a single, unified solution.

ROMEX RSG-10

ECOFINE - Resin Sand
TRASS BED - Paver Bedding
ADHESION ELUTRIANT - Thin Set



Porcea Tundra

Porcea Tundra delivers a durable gray granite look for high-traffic commercial spaces.



Porcea Black Opal

Porcea Black Opal offers a sparkling black granite look in durable outdoor porcelain.

Porcea outdoor porcelain products offer a durable, maintenance-free surface that is anti-slip and highly resistant to stains, UV fading, freeze-thaw cycles, and harsh de-icing chemicals. While the **Porcea porcelain** tile defines the aesthetic, the **ROMEX RSG-10 TRASS setting system** delivers maximum strength, bonded support, high permeability, and a **10-year system warranty** covering tile displacement, wind lift, freeze-thaw cycles, and deterioration of the grouted joints.

The Porcea surface and ROMEX setting system unite to deliver a project designed for lasting elegance.

ROMEX® HARDSCAPES
info@romexhardscapes.com

PORCEA STONE
info@porceastone.com

SCAN FOR MORE INFO



WEAVE DESIGN INTO YOUR INFRASTRUCTURE.

EPOXY-MODIFIED ACRYLIC COATINGS • FULL COLOUR MATCHING • SPECIFIED COAST TO COAST

Bridge the gap between utility and art. StreetBond pavement coatings transforms ordinary asphalt and concrete into vibrant, functional spaces. This epoxy-modified acrylic coating system moves with the pavement – flexible enough for Canadian applications, hard enough to resist wear, with colour-fast UV stability that holds season after season. It's not just a coating; it's a community statement.

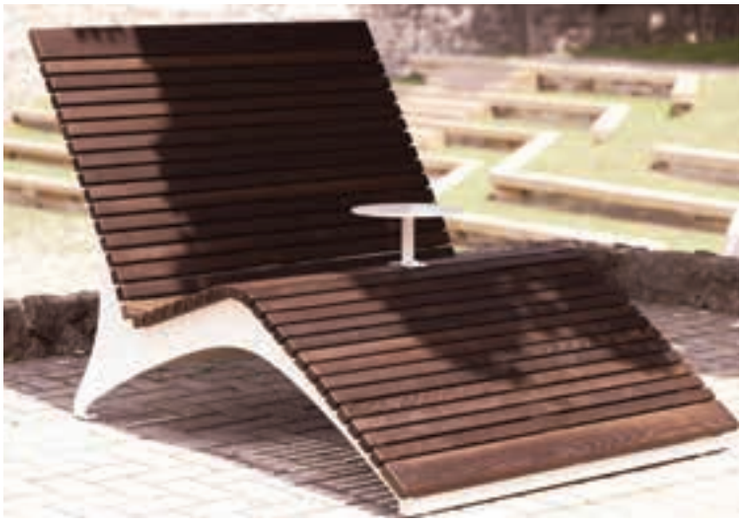
HUB SURFACE SYSTEMS

TRANSFORM YOUR COMMUNITY – START YOUR DESIGN WITH HUBSS.COM


More room to linger.
More reasons to stay.
MADE IN CANADA
FABRIQUÉ AU CANADA









Some moments call for movement. Others invite you to stay. The 720 Series holds both — a bench for busy public spaces and an expanded collection of lounge seating, now including shared options. One collection. One design language. Different ways to gather.

maglin.com

MAGLIN®



PATRICK BEECH

PARTNERSHIPS + PLANNING BUILD MOUNT MAHONY TRAILS

1

> **FR_LP+** PARTENARIATS + AMÉNAGEMENT DES SENTIERS DU MONT MAHONY

EN_

MOUNTAIN BIKERS LIKE to say that smooth is fast. On the trail, that might mean slowing down to find the best line through a corner. The same idea applies to building a new trail network: take the time to build relationships, develop a clear vision and create a detailed plan, so that when it is time to build, the work can move smoothly and quickly. That approach is exactly what enabled the qathet Regional Cycling Association (QRCA) to develop the Mount Mahony Trail Network near Powell River with such success.



2

The Mount Mahony Trail Network sits between Inland Lake Provincial Park and Haslam Lake on the southern slope of Mount Mahony. Located a short distance from Powell River in the qathet* Regional District, BC, Mahony is in the traditional territory of Tla'amin First Nation. Active logging occurs on the mountain in most years, creating a patchwork of past and future cutblocks. Before 2024, there were a handful of unauthorized expert and intermediate mountain bike trails, built over time by dedicated local builders and accessed via a forest service road.

Today, thanks to the efforts of QRCA, Mahony has an extensive network of authorized, gravity-oriented trails for all skill levels, along with a climbing trail, skills park, new trailhead, comprehensive wayfinding and safety signage, shuttle parking lot, and a trail connection to the campground at nearby Inland Lake Provincial Park.

In the past two years, the upgraded network has hosted Provincial High School Mountain Biking Championships and Island Cup Race Series enduro races, in addition to weekly QRCA social rides. It has welcomed visitors from across BC and beyond, generating significant visitor spending, as shown in a recent survey of trail users by Mountain Biking BC and Vancouver Island University researchers (https://shorturl.at/oqYX2). It has also benefited from thousands of hours of QRCA volunteer labour, including from young riders taking part in a weekly Youth

**The "q" in qathet Regional District (and Cycling Association) is deliberately lower case because the word is derived from the ʔay ʔaǰuθəm language of the Tla'amin Nation, which does not use capital letters.*



3



4

Dig Days program that teaches trail-building skills.

Volunteer-Driven Success

At the recent Outdoor Recreation Council of BC conference in Kamloops, many conversations focused on the challenges facing volunteer-run trail organizations, especially the difficulty of getting new trails approved. Beyond the extraordinary dedication of its volunteers, which many such groups share, what allowed QRCA to accomplish so much so quickly?

QRCA's success is built on relationships. That starts at the club level, where the association fosters an engaged riding community that organizes and attends events, manages the countless meetings and emails involved in running the association and maintains the trails through volunteer work parties and the ultra-dedicated Chain Gang work crew. It also includes partnerships with local businesses and the forestry companies with whom QRCA shares land. Crucially, QRCA has built a strong relationship with Tla'amin First Nation through steps such as creating a director of indigenous relations position on its board, proactively changing the association's name with the Nation's support, and continuing outreach and programming.

Another ingredient in QRCA's success was a clear vision. The association saw Mahony's potential as both a destination and a place where the next generation of riders could develop. The existing downhill trails already had a strong reputation, led by the top-to-bottom epic "Civil Disobedience." But the board understood that to grow the community and attract visitors, Mahony also needed places for new riders to learn, trails suited to different riding styles and infrastructure to accommodate increased use and riders from out of town.

Bringing In the Professionals

The QRCA also recognized the value of a detailed plan to turn that vision into reality. This meant bringing in professional help to identify sustainable alignments, navigate a complex regulatory environment and create a fun, efficient layout built to high standards. With a vision in place, LEES Landscape Architects and IMBA Canada's Trail Solutions consultants were brought in to develop a comprehensive trail plan for Mahony.

Through desktop mapping, stakeholder engagement and a week of hiking and recording potential routes from sunrise until sundown, the team developed a plan to take the trail network to the next level. This work formed the basis of QRCA's application to the province for authorization to build and maintain the trail network. Authorization is a crucial and often challenging step, as the province carefully considers the impact of proposed trails on First Nation interests, heritage resources, sensitive ecosystems, resource sectors and other land values. Once achieved, authorization gives the trails some protection from logging and clears the way for funding, insurance and other important considerations.

With a plan, authorization and additional funding secured, trail-building contractors Howler Contracting and, later, 56 Northwest Contracting were hired to deliver most of the trails and infrastructure, supported by significant contributions from club volunteers. QRCA also invested in a paid project manager to coordinate the work, a smart step given the project's complexity and pace.

The use of professionals through these steps represents an evolution for outdoor recreation in BC, where trails have largely been delivered by volunteers. In part, this shift responds to increasingly complex regulations and growing pressure on the land. It also reflects a broader recognition of the value trails bring to a community, whether social, economic or related to well-being, and the need for sustainable trails that will endure. For landscape architects and others working in outdoor recreation, that is a hopeful note. **LP**

1 MOUNT MAHONY **2** FINDING THE BEST WAY DOWN THROUGH A CUTBLOCK **3** CAPTURING GPS TRACKS **4** QUICKIE TRAIL

PHOTOS 1,4 SUNSHINE COAST TOURISM/BRICE SHIRBACH **2,3** PATRICK BEECH/LEES

CAMERON DELONG
WITH FILES FROM RASHADUL CHOWDHURY

MORE THAN A TRAIL

Stewardship, Climate Change and Connection in Kugluktuk

> **FR_LP+** PLUS QU'UN SIMPLE SENTIER
Intendance, changement climatique et connexion à Kugluktuk

EN_
I STILL REMEMBER my first visit to Kugluktuk in 2007.

At the time, I had recently joined the Government of Nunavut and was serving as a representative with the territorial parks program. Like many people working in the North, I was often asked by colleagues and friends from southern Canada whether I had seen evidence of climate change firsthand. The question was usually driven by genuine curiosity. People wanted to know whether the impacts they were reading about in reports and newspapers were visible on the ground. Until that point, I had struggled to answer. Then I visited Kugluktuk.

After two days of air travel, I found myself riding an ATV with a local park staff member toward Kugluk Territorial Park and Bloody Falls, following a well-used trail that connected the community to this special place along the Coppermine River. It was a sunny afternoon, and as we travelled across the tundra, we frequently stopped to take in the landscape and discuss the significance of the area. It was during one of those stops that I noticed something unusual.

Along the edge of the river valley, the tundra appeared to be stitched together in irregular patches, almost like the panels of a soccer ball. Sections of vegetation seemed to be slowly sagging toward the riverbank. Curious, I asked my travelling companion what I was looking at. His answer was simple. What I was seeing was permafrost thaw.

The frozen ground beneath the surface was changing, causing the landscape above it to settle and shift. In that moment, climate change stopped being an abstract concept discussed in scientific reports. It became something visible, tangible and immediate. Nearly 20 years later, that image remains with me. The Kugluktuk trail network provides a remarkable window into how climate change is reshaping northern landscapes.

Real-Time Changes

The Arctic is warming at a rate four times faster than much of the rest of the world. In many places, the impacts can be measured through scientific monitoring and climate records. In Kugluktuk, however, they can also be seen directly on the land. The trail itself became one of the earliest indicators.

As permafrost thawed and ground conditions changed, portions of the route became increasingly unstable. Areas that had once provided reliable access began to slump, soften or erode. Riders naturally sought alternate paths around these obstacles, creating wider areas of disturbance and placing additional pressure on fragile tundra ecosystems.

For local residents, these changes were not merely environmental observations. They affected access to places that mattered. What emerged was a growing recognition that maintaining the trail would require adaptation, not only to changing ground conditions but also to changing understandings of how the landscape itself functioned. Over time, this need for adaptation would inspire partnerships between community members, park staff, researchers and planners seeking to better understand the changes occurring beneath their feet.

For many people, a trail is viewed as a fixed piece of infrastructure, a route established once and maintained over time. The Kugluktuk trail tells a different story.



1



2

Perhaps the most important lesson from Kugluktuk is that stewardship extends beyond construction projects.

Long before planners, engineers or landscape architects became involved, the route existed as a network of travel corridors shaped by generations of Inuit knowledge. These paths connected harvesting areas, fishing locations, camps and culturally significant places. They evolved through observation and experience, reflecting an intimate understanding of terrain, weather, wildlife and seasonal conditions. As climate change began altering the landscape, the trail continued to evolve.

In some locations, rerouting became necessary where thawing permafrost threatened the integrity of the route.



3

New sections were cut further inland. Aggregate surfacing was added to improve stability. Small bridges and boardwalks were introduced where conditions justified them. Handrails and other safety features were incorporated in areas where visitors transitioned from the plateau down toward the river valley. These interventions required planning, funding and ongoing maintenance, but they also required something equally important: humility. The land was changing.

Adapting the Trail

Rather than forcing the landscape to conform to a predetermined design, the trail needed to adapt alongside the environment it occupied. Nowhere is this more evident than in the boardwalk improvements constructed within Kugluk Territorial Park. Designed to minimize impacts on thaw-sensitive tundra while maintaining community access, the elevated structures represent a modern response to an ancient challenge: how to move across the land while respecting its limitations. The result is infrastructure that acknowledges the landscape as dynamic rather than static, a trail system designed for a world that continues to change.

1 KUG TRAIL **2** LOOKING NORTH WHERE THE 2015 TRAIL WAS **3** PERMAFROST SLUFFING ON THE KUG TRAIL
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF NUNAVUT PARKS AND SPECIAL PLACES



4

The obvious question is, "Why?" Why invest so much effort in maintaining a trail? The answer lies in the significance of the place itself. To an outsider, the route may appear to be little more than an ATV trail stretching across the tundra. To residents of Kugluktuk, it is something much more.

The trail provides access to the Coppermine River, one of Canada's designated Heritage Rivers. It connects people to fishing locations, harvesting areas, cultural sites, family outings and opportunities to spend time on the land. It supports recreation, learning, wellness and the continuation of cultural practices that have shaped life in the region for generations.

The destination itself is equally remarkable. Bloody Falls is a place of historical, cultural and ecological significance. The area contains unique environmental conditions rarely found elsewhere in Nunavut, including mature willow stands that create a distinctly different landscape from the surrounding tundra. These willows have long supported traditional uses and continue to provide opportunities for community-led stewardship activities, including harvesting and pruning initiatives grounded in local knowledge. The connection between the community and this landscape runs deep.

Community Stewardship

When discussions emerged about trail improvements and long-term management, community members were not simply advocating for infrastructure. They were advocating for continued access to a place that forms part of their collective identity. The trail exists because the relationship



5



6

The trail, like the landscape itself, remains a story still being written.

exists. Perhaps the most important lesson from Kugluktuk is that stewardship extends beyond construction projects.

Recognizing the need to better understand changing ground conditions, Nunavut Parks and Special Places partnered with Polar Knowledge Canada and permafrost researcher Stephanie Coulombe to establish a monitoring program along the trail corridor. Shallow boreholes were installed to observe permafrost conditions and track changes over time. Yet the most significant aspect of the initiative may not be the technology itself. It is the people involved.

Much of the monitoring and observation work has been supported by local Inuit and community-based park staff who continue to document changes occurring across the landscape. Their observations help inform decisions about trail management, while also contributing to a growing body of knowledge about climate change in the region.

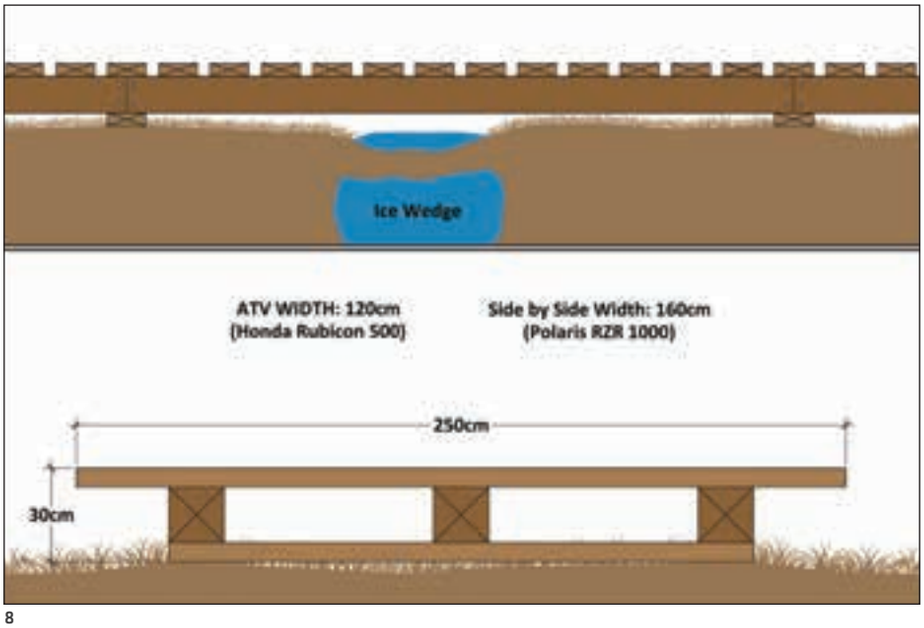
The monitoring program has become more than a scientific exercise. It has created opportunities for community learning, public engagement and climate literacy. Discussions about permafrost conditions along the trail naturally expand into conversations about impacts within the community and across the broader region. Youth and Elders alike contribute observations, experiences and perspectives that strengthen collective understanding.



7

Technology plays an important role in this work. Ground penetrating radar, geographic information systems, drone surveys and environmental monitoring tools all provide valuable insights. Yet in Kugluktuk, as in other Nunavut communities, technology is most effective when paired *with* Indigenous knowledge rather than positioned as an alternative.

The result is a model of stewardship that combines traditional knowledge, scientific inquiry and community leadership. It is stewardship, not as a program, but as a shared responsibility.



8

Looking back, what remains with me is not the boardwalks, rerouted trail sections or monitoring equipment. It is that conversation beside the trail nearly twenty years ago. What I initially saw as an interesting pattern in the tundra was, in fact, a lesson about change.

Since then, the community of Kugluktuk has continued to adapt alongside the landscape. Trails have shifted. Infrastructure has evolved. Research programs have expanded. Yet the purpose has remained remarkably consistent: maintaining the connection between people and place.

In the north, a trail is rarely just a trail. It is a route to food, culture, learning, memory and belonging. It is a living system shaped by climate, community and history. It is evidence that adaptation is not solely about protecting infrastructure, but about preserving the relationships that infrastructure exists to support.

The story of the Kugluktuk trail is ultimately not about boardwalks, permafrost or engineering. It is about stewardship. It is about listening to the land. And it is about a community's commitment to ensuring that future generations can continue to travel, learn from and care for a place that has sustained them for generations. The trail, like the landscape itself, remains a story still being written. **LP**

4 2016: BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION NEAR COMPLETION **5** 2017 THERMISTOR INSTALLATION **6** 2017: YOUTH CORE SAMPLING **7** ATV BOARDWALK, KUGLUK **8** BOARDWALK DESIGN
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF NUNAVUT PARKS AND SPECIAL PLACES

JOSIANE ROY

LE GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST : VECTEUR IDENTITAIRE DU GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST

FR_

LE GRAND PARC de l'Ouest est né en 2019 d'une volonté politique claire : préserver un ensemble exceptionnel de milieux naturels et agricoles dans l'ouest de l'île de Montréal, à l'heure où la pression immobilière s'y faisait croissante. Par son envergure et sa mission, il marque un tournant majeur en matière de protection de la biodiversité, de mise en valeur des espaces naturels et d'accès à un vaste réseau de plein air urbain : avec ses 3 100 hectares, soit quinze fois la superficie du parc du Mont-Royal, il est appelé à devenir l'un des plus grands parcs de compétence municipale au Canada, constituant un apport précieux pour l'accès à la nature en ville. Le Grand parc de l'Ouest, issu de la fusion de quatre parcs-nature et d'un parc agricole, se déploie sur les territoires de deux arrondissements et de quatre villes liées, constituant une mosaïque de forêts anciennes, terres agricoles, friches et milieux humides, où se cache aussi un patrimoine bâti, culturel et naturel méconnu.

Devant cette complexité, comment révéler l'identité de ce vaste territoire et le rendre accessible pour rapprocher la population de ses paysages? Un grand défi exigeait un grand geste, et ce geste, dont les contours ont été définis par la Ville de Montréal dans la *Stratégie de mise en valeur,* c'est le Grand sentier de l'Ouest : un parcours de 30 km appelé à agir comme vecteur identitaire du parc.

L'amorce

Tout naturellement, l'expérience paysagère sensible du lieu est le principal moteur de conception : cette volonté affirmée, il

« Un réseau de parcours multifonctionnels et quatre saisons relie les secteurs et pôles d'accueil du Grand parc de l'Ouest. Il s'appuie sur les caractéristiques naturelles, agricoles, patrimoniales et paysagères des lieux traversés. Ce réseau de sentiers met en valeur l'authenticité des lieux, permet des usages multiples [...], propose des aires de repos et offre des installations informatives et éducatives sur les milieux traversés. Le Grand sentier de l'Ouest agit comme colonne vertébrale de ce réseau [...]. »

– Extrait de la Stratégie de mise en valeur du Grand parc de l'Ouest, Ville de Montréal (2023)



1



JOSIANE ROY

THE GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST: IDENTITY ACROSS A VAST TERRITORY

2

EN_

THE GRAND PARC de l'Ouest was established in 2019 from a clear political commitment to protect an exceptional stretch of natural and agricultural land on the western tip of the island of Montréal, just as real estate pressure on the area was beginning to intensify. At 3,100 hectares, an area 15 times the size of Mount Royal Park, it is set to become one of the largest municipally managed parks in Canada, a significant gain for biodiversity and for public access to nature in the city. Formed through the merger of four nature parks and one agricultural park, it stretches across two boroughs and four related municipalities, holding within it a mosaic of old-growth forest, farmland, fallow land and wetland, along with a built and cultural heritage that remains little known.



3

Faced with this complexity, how could the park's identity be revealed, and its landscapes made accessible enough for people to feel close to them? A challenge of this scale called for a gesture of matching ambition. That gesture, laid out by the City of Montréal in its development strategy, is the Grand sentier de l'Ouest, a 30-kilometre trail conceived to carry the park's identity from one end to the other.

1 LE GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST. 170 PROPRIÉTAIRES SE PARTAGENT LE TERRITOIRE DU GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST, LA VILLE DE MONTRÉAL ÉTANT PROPRIÉTAIRE D'UN PEU PLUS DE 40% DE LA SUPERFICIE (EN VERT FONCÉ). | THE GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST. THE GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST TERRITORY IS SHARED AMONG 170 PROPERTY OWNERS, WITH THE CITY OF MONTRÉAL HOLDING JUST OVER 40% OF THE TOTAL AREA (SHOWN IN DARKER GREEN). **2, 3** PAYSAGES DU GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST | LANDSCAPES OF THE GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST
PHOTOS 1-3 LEMAY

"A network of multifunctional, four-season trails connects the sectors and welcome hubs of the Grand parc de l'Ouest. It draws on the natural, agricultural, heritage and landscape characteristics of the areas it crosses. This trail network highlights the authenticity of these places, supports a range of uses [...], provides rest areas and offers informative and educational installations about the surrounding environments. The Grand sentier de l'Ouest acts as the backbone of this network [...]."

– Excerpt from the Stratégie de mise en valeur du Grand parc de l'Ouest, City of Montréal (2023)





4,5

s'agissait pour l'équipe de développer puis transposer une compréhension fine du territoire, de ses dynamiques saisonnières et de ses couches historiques, mais aussi de sa connectivité avec les réseaux de transports, ainsi que des usages formels et informels préexistants. Le succès du projet en résultant repose sur un délicat équilibre entre aménagement expérientiel, mise en valeur des paysages et préservation des milieux naturels. Y parvenir aura demandé une étroite collaboration – d'abord entre la Ville de Montréal et Lemay, mais aussi avec d'autres professionnels, dont des ingénieurs et des biologistes. La population riveraine, à travers des consultations publiques, a également participé à préciser les décisions conceptuelles qui structurent l'évolution du projet, s'exprimant sur les usages existants autant que sur les souhaits pour l'avenir du site. L'accessibilité universelle et l'inclusion font aussi partie de la réflexion d'un aussi grand projet, les choix de design et de tracé devant permettre l'accès à l'expérience nature au plus grand nombre, peu importe leurs limitations. Le résultat : un tracé qui organise une multitude de moments identitaires en un geste unificateur, révélant le territoire majestueux qu'est le Grand parc de l'Ouest.

L'ampleur : un défi d'aménagement

Comment révéler les paysages d'une grande richesse écologique qui caractérisent le Grand parc de l'Ouest tout en assurant leur préservation? D'abord, en mobilisant un grand nombre de partenaires et en déployant des efforts de négociation soutenus, que ce soit en matière d'acquisition, de servitudes ou de conciliations d'usages.

Cette étendue du parc autant que ses multiples obstacles (cours d'eau, milieux humides, friches impraticables, etc.) ont nécessité une approche plurielle combinant cartographie, étude de photographies aériennes anciennes et actuelles et nombreuses visites de site afin de bien saisir les dynamiques saisonnières du territoire de même que les différentes ambiances paysagères. Ce processus apporte son lot d'aléas autant que de surprises : si certains lieux apparaissent comme des ambiances incontournables en photo ou lors d'une visite préliminaire, une présence abondante de moustiques constatée quelques mois plus tard pourra dissuader le plus fervent randonneur, et motiver une correction du tracé. Une révision de la cartographie des milieux humides du secteur Anse-à-l'Orme s'est quant à elle traduite par la nécessité d'intégrer davantage de passerelles à ce segment.

Ces remises en question permettent d'améliorer continuellement l'approche conceptuelle. À terme, chaque portion de sentier aménagée révèle pleinement l'unicité du secteur dans lequel elle s'inscrit, et les façons dont celui-ci se distingue des secteurs adjacents. On a notamment réfléchi la matérialité pour révéler les variations du paysage sans jamais lui voler la vedette : le sentier passera ainsi de la poussière de pierre au platelage de bois, à la terre battue et la surface fauchée, alors que près des berges des pierres font leur apparition.

Le plus important, pour l'équipe, est de ne pas perdre de vue les objectifs du projet, les bénéfices souhaités pour la population, et la mission du réseau des parcs-nature. Pour maintenir la cohérence de l'ensemble, on peut compter sur différents outils, dont le *Cahier de critères de design des parcs-nature.* « Le cahier de critères de design permet de consolider l'identité, l'esthétisme et la sobriété du réseau des parcs-nature, tout en garantissant la facilité d'entretien et l'harmonie entre les aménagements et les écosystèmes », résume Clémence Fauteux,

4 PÔLE D'ACCUEIL, SECTEUR BOIS-DE-LA-ROCHE | WELCOME HUB, BOIS-DE-LA-ROCHE SECTOR **5** PAYSAGE DU GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST | LANDSCAPE OF THE GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST **6** MATÉRIALITÉ DU GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST | MATERIALITY OF THE GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST
4,5 LEMAY **6** MATHIEU SPARKS, VILLE DE MONTRÉAL



6

The Starting Point

The site's sensory landscape experience drives the design, first and foremost. From there, the team set out to understand the territory in detail: its seasonal rhythms, its historical layers, its connections to the surrounding transit networks, as well as the formal and informal uses already at play. Design followed from that understanding. Its success rests on a careful balance, one that lets an experience-driven approach highlight the landscape without disturbing the natural environments the trail moves through.

Getting there took close collaboration, first between the City of Montréal and Lemay, then with other professionals as well, among them engineers and biologists. Public consultations gave residents living near the park a voice in the decisions shaping its evolution; on existing uses as much as on hopes for the site's future. Universal accessibility and inclusion were part of that conversation too: routing and design choices needed to open the nature experience to as many people as possible, whatever limitations they might face. What emerged is a path that gathers a multitude of identity-defining moments into one unifying gesture, revealing the Grand parc de l'Ouest in its full scale.

Scale as a Design Challenge

How can landscapes as ecologically rich as those of the Grand parc de l'Ouest be revealed while also protecting them? It starts with mobilizing a wide range of partners and sustaining long negotiation efforts, over land acquisition, easements, and the reconciling of different uses.

The park's sheer size, along with obstacles such as waterways, wetlands and impassable fallow land, called for a layered approach: mapping, the study of historical and current aerial photographs and repeated site visits, all in service of capturing the territory's seasonal shifts and its many landscape moods. This process brings its share of setbacks and surprises. A site that looks like an unmissable spot in a photo or during an initial visit may, months later, turn out to be overrun with mosquitoes, enough to discourage even the most dedicated hiker and enough to prompt a revised alignment. In the Anse-à-l'Orme sector, an updated wetland mapping made it necessary to add more boardwalks to that segment of the trail.

These course corrections are what keep sharpening the trail's relevance and appeal as the project moves forward.

Each finished section of trail reveals the particular character of its sector, and how that sector differs from its neighbours. Materiality was chosen with the same intent, to reveal the landscape's variations without ever upstaging them. The trail surface shifts in step, from crushed stone to wood decking, packed earth and mown swaths through tall grass, with stone appearing near the shoreline.

For the team, staying focused on the project's objectives and its intended public benefit matters more than any single design decision, always in keeping with the broader mission of the nature parks network. A number of tools help hold that coherence together, among them the network's own design criteria handbook. "The design criteria handbook helps reinforce the identity, aesthetic and restraint of the nature parks network, while ensuring ease of maintenance and harmony between built elements and ecosystems," says Clémence Fauteux, Landscape Architect, Nature Parks Development, City of Montréal.

Beyond materiality, it's the points of interest along the way that make up the trail's real draw. The route is designed to stage their discovery, to reveal them



7

Architecte paysagiste – Aménagement des parcs-nature à la Ville de Montréal.

Au-delà de la matérialité du sentier même, ce sont bien sûr les points d'intérêt rencontrés au long du parcours qui en constituent l'attrait principal. Le sentier est réfléchi de manière à mettre en scène leur découverte, à révéler toute leur richesse et leur diversité : à terme, même une personne familière avec ce territoire sera amenée à le redécouvrir, plus en profondeur et avec plus de nuances, en empruntant le parcours proposé par le Grand sentier.

Un paysage qui traverse les époques

L'expérience de découverte est structurée par un découpage du territoire en secteurs, soit : les champs, le cap, la rivière, la pointe et le bocage, le bois et les rapides. Précisons que, si certains éléments naturels caractérisent ces secteurs, différents milieux – forêts anciennes, champs, friches et milieux humides – ponctuent en proportion variable tout le parc : il nous revient de créer de la clarté dans cette diversité.

Plusieurs terres et friches agricoles ponctuent par exemple le parc, notamment dans les secteurs de L'Île-Bizard, mais l'identité agricole se concentre davantage dans le secteur Bois-de-la-Roche : c'est dans cette zone qu'une ferme patrimoniale est mise en valeur en bordure du lac des Deux Montagnes. Dans le même secteur, des murets de pierres sèches ayant servi à délimiter les anciennes terres agricoles, faisant vivre aux randonneurs et randonneuses une organisation antérieure du territoire. Certaines ruines et certains bâtiments sont appelés à être réhabilités pour accueillir la population, tandis que d'autres apparaitront à travers la végétation qui reprend ses droits, témoignant de l'enfrichement progressif des terres et conférant une poésie particulière au paysage.

De la sorte, le sentier invite à vivre cette progression paysagère des champs cultivés, aux friches herbacées, arbustives et arborescentes jusqu'aux forêts anciennes, souvent marécageuses.

Au-delà de leur attrait patrimonial et éducatif, ces différents milieux naturels présentent une richesse écologique rare sur l'ile de Montréal. À première vue, il pourrait être tentant de vouloir effacer ces friches pour les retransformer en forêts. Pourtant, elles abritent une concentration importante d'oiseaux champêtres faisant non seulement le bonheur des ornithologues, mais soulignant également l'importance de préserver la variété de milieux naturels par divers régimes de fauche. L'intention d'assurer le dynamisme des paysages vient donc à la rencontre de la volonté d'assurer une variété d'habitats pour la faune du secteur.

Tracer la voie : par et pour le vivant

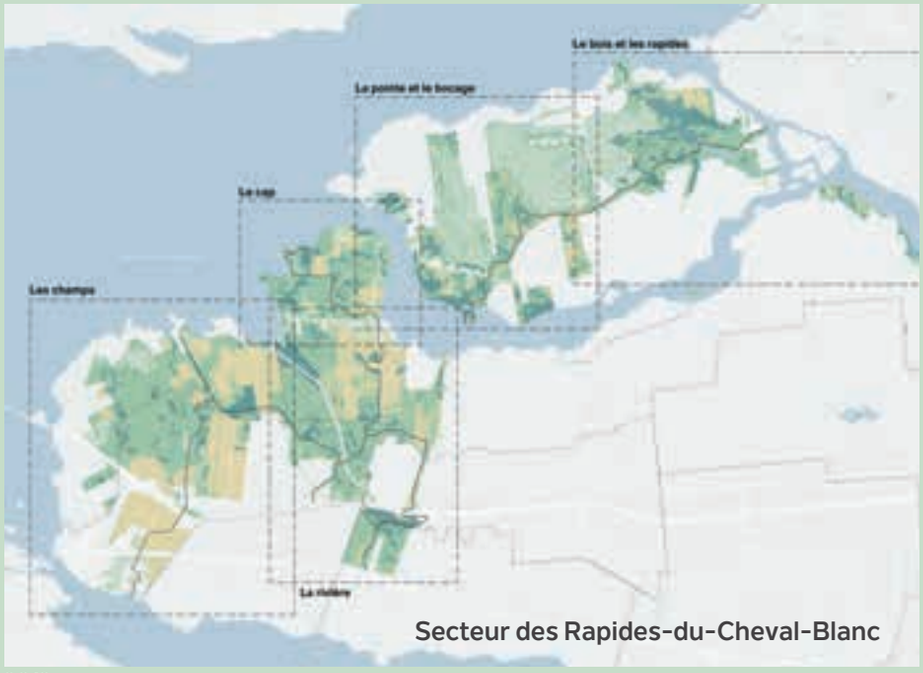
Cette cohabitation entre la population, la faune et la flore du parc, qui n'est pas sans rappeler celle recherchée dans les parcs nationaux, est en fait typique des parcs-nature, des parcs urbains qui visent à « conserver les milieux naturels et la biodiversité afin d'offrir à la population les bienfaits d'un réseau de parcs mettant en valeur le patrimoine naturel et culturel, par le biais d'expériences immersives et éducatives en nature, d'activités de plein air respectueuses des écosystèmes et d'approches d'aménagement et de gestion s'adaptant aux changements climatiques et à l'évolution des pratiques ». Dans le Grand sentier de l'Ouest, plusieurs stratégies sont mises en œuvre pour assurer l'accès public au parc, dans le respect des milieux naturels sensibles.

Dans une forêt ancienne du secteur Anse-à-l'Orme, parmi les nombreux sentiers informels qui sillonnaient l'espace, se

7-9 MATÉRIALITÉ DU GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST | MATERIALITY OF THE GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST
10 LES ENTITÉS PAYSAGÈRES DU GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST | LANDSCAPE UNITS OF THE GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST
PHOTOS 7,10 LEMAY **8,9** MATHIEU SPARKS, VILLE DE MONTRÉAL







Secteur des Rapides-du-Cheval-Blanc

8,9,10

in their full richness. Even someone who already knows this territory will end up rediscovering it, in more depth and with more nuance, simply by walking the Grand sentier.

A Landscape Across Time

The discovery experience unfolds across a set of distinct sectors: the Fields, the Cape, the River, the Point and Grove, the Woods, the Rapids. Certain natural features define each one, but old-growth forest, fields, fallow land and wetland all recur throughout the park, in shifting proportions. Bringing clarity to that diversity was part of the design task.

The park's agricultural character offers one example. Farmland and agricultural fallow land turn up throughout the park, notably around L'Île-Bizard, but the park's agricultural identity is most concentrated in the Bois-de-la-Roche sector. It's there that a heritage farm, set along the shore of Lac des Deux Montagnes, becomes a destination along the Grand sentier. The trail, in this same sector, runs alongside or crosses dry stone walls that once marked the edges of older farmland, giving hikers a feel for how the territory was once divided. Some ruins and buildings will be restored to welcome visitors; others will simply emerge through vegetation that has reclaimed the land, a quiet reminder of fields gone fallow and a particular poetry in the landscape.

The trail carries this progression forward, from cultivated fields to herbaceous, shrub and tree-covered fallow land, and on to old-growth forest that is often marshy.

Beyond their heritage and educational value, these environments hold an ecological richness rare on the island of Montréal. It might seem tempting, at first glance, to clear the fallow land and let forest take back over. But these same fallow areas host a significant concentration of grassland birds, a presence that delights birdwatchers and underlines why a variety of natural environments needs to be preserved through different mowing regimes. Keeping the landscape dynamic, in other words, serves the same end as keeping habitat varied for the area's wildlife.

Tracing the Path: By and For the Living World

This cohabitation between people and the park's wildlife and plant life echoes, in many ways, what national parks aim for.



11

connectant aux quartiers résidentiels, un arbitrage est opéré entre formalisation et renaturalisation, afin d'éviter la fragmentation des milieux naturels. Ailleurs, certaines portions du sentier seront conservées, mais mises sur passerelle afin d'éviter des milieux sensibles ou humides, ou pour mieux préserver des espèces à statut, nombreuses dans le parc. S'inspirant tantôt de la forme du nid de l'oriole de Baltimore et des herbes dansantes au vent, tantôt de la verticalité de la forêt et des ondulations de la berge, les passerelles et autres haltes qui ponctuent le sentier ne sont pas qu'une réponse à la contrainte, mais subliment des composantes naturelles qui font la beauté du parc, servant de points de force au Grand sentier de l'Ouest.

Accessible en transport en commun en moins de 45 minutes depuis le centre-ville, le Grand parc de l'Ouest offre une expérience incomparable à la population urbaine, conjuguant paysages, textures et couleurs pour stimuler les sens et permettre de laisser le cadre citadin derrière soi. Comment révéler l'identité de ce vaste territoire? Par un sentier long de 30 km, le Grand sentier de l'Ouest, qui vient guider une expérience paysagère sensible et cohésive, où une mosaïque savamment mise en lumière de milieux naturels et agricoles se révèle tranquillement au fil du parcours et des haltes rencontrées. Derrière la mise en œuvre de cette déambulation tout en douceur se cachent des efforts soutenus et une recherche ardente de l'équilibre entre protection et mise en valeur, nécessitant adaptabilité et collaboration. Dans un territoire aussi vaste et riche que celui du Grand parc de l'Ouest, l'architecte paysagiste met en scène la nature, prenant le soin de placer aux premières loges quiconque empruntera le Grand sentier. **LP**



12

Mandat :
2023 - en cours
Équipe en architecture de paysage : **Lemay**
Client : Ville de Montréal | Service Espace pour la vie, grands parcs et Mont-Royal

Références :
Ville de Montréal. (2023) Stratégie de mise en valeur du Grand parc de l'Ouest. Service des grands parcs, du Mont-Royal et des sports. Montréal, QC. PDF

11 PERCÉE VISUELLE SUR UNE ANCIENNE MAISON DE FERME | VISUAL OPENING ONTO A FORMER FARMHOUSE **12** PROGRESSION PAYSAGÈRE DU GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST | LANDSCAPE PROGRESSION ALONG THE GRAND SENTIER DE L'OUEST **13** SENTIER LONGEANT UN MURET DE PIERRES SÈCHES | TRAIL RUNNING ALONGSIDE A DRY STONE WALL **14** PAYSAGE DU GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST | LANDSCAPE OF THE GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST
PHOTOS 11-14 LEMAY

It's typical of nature parks specifically, a category of urban park built to "conserve natural environments and biodiversity in order to offer the public the benefits of a park network that showcases natural and cultural heritage, through immersive and educational nature experiences, outdoor activities that respect ecosystems, and development and management approaches that adapt to climate change and evolving practices." Along the Grand sentier de l'Ouest, a number of strategies work together to secure public access to the park while protecting its most sensitive natural environments.

In an old-growth forest in the Anse-à-l'Orme sector, where informal trails once crisscrossed the area and connected into nearby residential neighbourhoods, the team struck a balance between formalizing some paths and letting others return to a natural state, to avoid fragmenting the natural environment. Elsewhere, sections of trail stay in place but move onto boardwalks, clearing sensitive or wet ground and protecting the at-risk species that are common throughout the park.

The boardwalks and rest stops along the way take their cues from the park itself: the shape of a Baltimore Oriole's nest, grasses swaying in the wind, the verticality of the forest, the curve of a riverbank. These structures do more than answer physical constraints. They draw out the natural features that give the park its beauty, and they stand among the Grand sentier de l'Ouest's strongest design moments.

Reachable by public transit in under 45 minutes from downtown, the Grand parc de l'Ouest offers city dwellers an experience unlike any other, one that blends landscape, texture and colour to engage the senses and pull them away from the city for a while. How can the identity of such a vast territory be revealed? Through a 30-kilometre trail.



13



14

The Grand sentier de l'Ouest guides visitors through a coherent, sensory landscape experience, where a carefully composed mosaic of natural and agricultural environments reveals itself quietly, stop by stop, along the trail. Behind this gentle, unhurried walk lie sustained effort and a determined pursuit of balance between protection and enhancement, a pursuit that called for both adaptability and collaboration. In a territory as vast and rich as the Grand parc de l'Ouest, the landscape architect stages nature itself, taking care to give a front-row seat to anyone who sets out on the Grand sentier. **LP**

Mandate:

2023-ongoing
Landscape architecture team: **Lemay**
Client: Ville de Montréal | Service Espace pour la vie, grands parcs et Mont-Royal

References:

Ville de Montréal. (2023) Stratégie de mise en valeur du Grand parc de l'Ouest. Service des grands parcs, du Mont-Royal et des sports. Montréal, QC. PDF

ALEX MAN

PLACE TO PLACE, PERSON TO PERSON

Collaborating to Build Connection Along the Northgate Trail Network

> **FR_LP+** D'UN LIEU À L'AUTRE, D'UNE PERSONNE À L'AUTRE
Collaborer pour tisser des liens le long du réseau de sentiers Northgate

EN_

AS TRAIL DESIGNERS, at its very simplest, our role is to create connections: from one place to another, and from people to the land. But with some trails, "connection" doesn't only happen once construction is complete; it's the critical foundation without which the trail wouldn't have been possible in the first place.

My favourite project of my trail design career thus far is a shining example of what can happen when you connect all the right people to work together – with open minds and without ego – in pursuit of a significant common goal.



1



2

The Riding Mountain National Park Trail Concept Plan project has been almost 10 years in the making and wouldn't exist without the collaboration of everyone from recreation advocates, landowners and government teams to local youth, Elders and the Bicycle Knowledge Keeper who's kept reconciliation at the project's forefront.

For me, this is a story of fat biking with the Premier of Manitoba, bushwhacking in sweltering heat, falling in love with (and in) a new community, and spending a decade evolving a four-kilometre youth mountain bike course on private land into a 70-kilometre modern stacked loop trail network crossing into a national park. But most of all, it's a story of collaboration.

The Project

Back in 2016, I heard from David Bosiak: a professional recreation planner who's now also the mayor of the City of Dauphin. He was already familiar with our team at Scatliff + Miller + Murray (SMM) and wanted to connect me with the team who would eventually become Northgate Trails Incorporated, with the goal of designing a mountain bike course for the 2020 Manitoba Summer Games.

Alongside Clayton Swanton, the current president of Northgate, and Melisa Stefaniw, Northgate's grant writer at the time, David had been fundraising to get the course designed and built. Together, we developed a course that can be enjoyed by all ages and has been used to host both summer mountain bike races and winter snowshoe and fat bike events ever since. But the Northgate trio also had their eyes on the opportunity to create

For me, this is a story of fat biking with the Premier of Manitoba, bushwhacking in sweltering heat, falling in love with (and in) a new community, and spending a decade evolving a four-kilometre youth mountain bike course on private land into a 70-kilometre modern stacked loop trail network crossing into a national park. But most of all, it's a story of collaboration.



3

something much bigger and more inclusive in the future. Before construction for the Manitoba Summer Games course was even complete, we were developing a trail network concept plan that envisioned the surrounding parkland landscape as a regional trail hub.

This concept plan became the 26-kilometre stacked loop Northgate Trails network, which opened in 2019 and was designed and built to appeal to all people in all seasons – from young families using snowshoes or pushing strollers all the way up to expert mountain bikers.

By this point, others were taking notice of the potential to connect the Northgate Trails network with Riding Mountain National Park's existing trail network. In 2020, SMM was hired by Parks Canada to design this integration – which required rehabilitation to approximately 14 kilometres of existing trail (mostly old logging roads) and development of approximately 30 kilometres of new trail, all of which will serve less-experienced and more advanced trail users alike.

In combination with the Northgate Trails network, the final result of this project will be a 70-kilometre modern stacked loop trail network.

The Collaborators

To understate things: 10 years of work and 70 kilometres of trail doesn't happen in a silo. Within our own team, Jennifer Wagner, Ana Hodych, Matthew Peters and Thomas Jordan – just a few of SMM's experts in landscape architecture, biology, arboristry and regional planning – were a crucial complement to my experience in trail design and geological engineering, playing key roles in the project's success.

The Northgate Trails network also runs through a combination of public, private and municipal land, which required each landowner to see the unique value of the project and sign a Memorandum of Understanding for its use of the space.

First up was Selo Ukraina's land, which hosts festivals and other events every year. They saw the recreational benefit of adding the Northgate Trails network to their own facilities and were very welcoming with their land.

South of Selo Ukraina is private land owned by local residents, including Jim Crozier, an all-season outdoorsman who's known for snowshoeing 100 kilometres a week in the winter; he quickly recognized the value of creating permanent trails for the next generation. Simply put: he loves where he lives and wants to see the land enjoyed to the fullest.

1 NORTHGATE TRAIL MAP **2** ALEX MAN TESTING A TECHNICAL TRAIL FEATURE AT THE JUMP PARK **3** CLAYTON SWANTON AND HIS DAUGHTER FOLLOWING TWO "KIDS OF MUD" PARTICIPANTS ALONG THE SLIM JIM TRAIL
PHOTOS 1 CLAYTON SWANTON **2** TRAVEL MANITOBA **3** TOURISM DAUPHIN



4

Further south (and bordering Riding Mountain National Park) is land owned by the City of Dauphin. The late former Mayor Eric Irwin was a champion for the project idea and paved the way for the Northgate Trails network to exist on city land.

Northgate's Clayton Swanton was instrumental in engaging and building the positive relationships with each landowner that made this project possible. He made connections individually and early. He was able to explain the value of the project in clear terms: from accessing the wilderness in your own backyard to attracting new residents and tourists to the community.

The team was also in full support of integrating Indigenous engagement as a key project component. Adrian Alphonso is a member of Waywayseecappo First Nation, Bicycle Knowledge Keeper, Truth and Reconciliation Facilitator and Experiential Educator whose "trails as reconciliation" approach and experience in trail maintenance and programming has influenced the project's design at every stage.

On the Northgate Trails network, Adrian has been integral in breaking down the intimidation barrier for young trail users (who may work as trail maintainers some day!) – hosting kids from Waywayseecappo First Nation to receive coaching, enjoy the trails on fat bikes and share ideas on what experiences they'd look for on the trails – and educating visitors through reconciliation walks and presentations on the family trails.

Adrian has also been joined by community Elders in providing guidance on environmental and Indigenous relations considerations as we explored the park. Their knowledge on sacred land has been foundational; we listen, and we move through the space accordingly.

As the project crossed into Riding Mountain National Park, Parks Canada's team joined the design review process to ensure alignment with Parks Canada's trail concept planning protocols and trail principles. As these protocols have always served as our guide at SMM, the integration has felt seamless – despite the fact that "outside" groups building trails in a National Park is practically unprecedented!

We've also been incorporating the Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association's specifications for adaptive mountain



5



6

bike trail design to ensure access for the broadest spectrum of users.

As you can likely imagine, this wide breadth of collaboration has required significant design iteration, ultimately improving the overall plan. And we landed on a final concept – and a final price tag – at what turned out to be just the right time.

The Funding and the Future

In 2024, Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew brought his cabinet to the project area for a retreat. By then, David Bosiak was mayor of the City of Dauphin, and he invited the region's visitors to try out a fat bike tour of the area. The previous day's big storm made riding conditions less than ideal, but the value of the project was clear.

The following winter, the Premier returned to Dauphin's City Hall for a formal presentation. Shortly thereafter, the funds required for the project were incorporated into the provincial budget – and the green light we'd been waiting on lit up.

While some work on the existing Edwards Creek trail began in 2024, the project's construction officially kicks off in Fall 2026 – after the end of nesting season, and perhaps just days after you read this. The trail will be surgically machine-built, metre by metre, until it's ready for use in late 2026.

Without hyperbole, this project changed my life. Working with SMM, Dauphin is now my home, and Melisa Stefaniw (of Northgate) is now my wife. And the trails on which I've worked for the past 10 years are literally outside my front door; the trailhead is only a five-minute ride from home.





7,8

If you're a trail designer tackling a project of this scale, the best advice I can offer is to keep both partnership and patience at the forefront.

We all have our own way of moving through the forest and trying to create a feeling or direct people's eyes to certain things, but my interpretation is always better when I have others looking at it alongside me. Rather than trying to create a one-size-fits-all experience, providing options that allow users to level up in their own time will ensure everyone's needs are met. I've had countless "co-designers" on this project, and it's far better for it.

As for patience… the design challenges of this project have been minor, but constant. Trail design is very different from conventional landscape architecture, because you're working in a space with zero pathways. You're visualizing what could be, but in the meantime, you're in a forest. You can't see more than 10 feet in front of you. It's hot. There are bugs. It's slow going.

Remember to let the vision drive you; I promise the reward is waiting at the end of the trail. **LP**



9

4 VOLUNTEERS BUILDING A BOARDWALK ON QUITE FRANKLY TRAIL **5** L-R: MELISA STEFANIW AND ALEX MAN AT THE TRAILHEAD **6** OUTDOOR STAGE AT ONE OF THE CHILDREN'S PLAY NODES LOCATED NEAR THE TRAILHEAD **7** SIGN AND WASHROOM FACILITY AT THE TRAILHEAD **8** MICROCABIN AT THE TRAILHEAD **9** SNOWSHOEING ON EDWARDS CREEK CONNECTOR TRAIL

PHOTOS 4 CLAYTON SWANTON **5** ALEX MAN **6** TRAVEL MANITOBA **7** GEM BARROZO **8** BRENON DURSTON **9** TOURISM DAUPHIN

MATT WILLIAMS

UP, DOWN AND ALL AROUND

The Trails of Dinosaur Provincial Park

> FR_LP+
EN HAUT, EN BAS ET TOUT AUTOUR
Les sentiers du parc provincial Dinosaur

EN_

MY FIRST VISIT to Dinosaur Provincial Park was in September 2020. In the throes of COVID, my family was looking for places to explore and with a five- and three-year-old, a dinosaur-themed adventure fit the bill perfectly. We packed up our van and slowly made our way three hours east to the park located along the Red Deer River, 125 kilometres downstream of Drumheller. This is an important distinction as many prospective visitors to the Royal Tyrell Museum, a world-class museum featuring an extensive collection of fossils and research facilities, expect to encounter the museum in Dinosaur Provincial Park, but it's actually in Drumheller. As such, "Not Drumheller" has become a popular designation for the park. Despite this, the park holds something even more special for visitors: the opportunity for people of all ages to embrace their inner child and go on an adventure.

For my family, this was easy. Arriving at the campground, my kids immediately took off up the slopes of the badland formations, scrambling hand over foot, following the paths of others that dug deeply into the soft landforms, right to the top. As I ran up behind them, heart pounding, to try and keep them safe, a wild network of trails crisscrossing over the landscape in every direction emerged; I knew we had come to a magical place. A place where dinosaurs once roamed and where kids, and the inner children of their parents, are now the dominant species, roaming wherever they want, loving a beautifully fragile landscape to death.

Unlike Any Other Place

As a World Heritage Site, Dinosaur Provincial Park is globally significant for the protection and interpretation of the area's paleontological and natural heritage that, combined with its outstanding scenic resources, makes it unlike any other place in the world. The story of this place is directly from a children's book. Some 75 million years ago it was subtropical, with lush forests covering a coastal plain. The life here was wild – fish, crocodiles, flying reptiles and diverse dinosaurs were crawling across the land and seas. The great rivers left sand and mud deposits that make up the present-day valley walls, hills and hoodoos of the park, carved out by retreating glaciers 13,000 years ago. These distinct geological formations are visceral storytellers, illustrating the layers of deposition and the effects of continuous erosion that exposes new fossils every year.

In the late 19th century, the park was recognized for its rich fossil deposits, and by the 1920s most of the exposed fossils in the area were removed and distributed to museums around the world. In 1955, the area was designated a provincial park, gaining its world heritage status in 1979. It is unmatched in terms of the number and variety of high-quality specimens, over 300 of which represent more than 25 genera and 12 families of dinosaurs. The park's ecological features and minimally disturbed riparian habitat contribute significantly to maintaining southern Alberta's Dry Mixed Grassland biodiversity, protecting rare and endangered species, such as species of hawks, falcons, owls, toads and foxes, as well as the unique Ord's Kangaroo Rat.



1

All of this leads to a tremendously compelling and beautiful place that visitors love to explore. And there's something about the place's scale that induces exploration. You can look up at the tops of the rolling hills that feel distant and otherworldly, then in 10 minutes of modest hiking be at the top looking down and across the vast landscape. It's like a mountainous landscape in miniature; a model scaled perfectly for childlike discovery and adventure. There are cacti and sinkholes, slopes you can slide down, hoodoos you can jump over, and an always present hope of finding a fossil. This natural wonderland has led to the place being



This natural wonderland has led to the place being overrun with braiding pathways in every direction, up, down and across all manner of slope.

overrun with braiding pathways in every direction, up, down and across all manner of slope. While compelling in ways, this unregulated trail system lacked standards for accessibility and was contributing to the destruction of the landscape visitors loved.

1 INSTALLATION OF STAIRS **2** A FOSSIL DISCOVERED ON A GUIDED HIKE IN THE PARK'S RESTRICTED AREA
PHOTOS O2

A Network as Unique as the Place

Later in 2020, O2 was fortunate to win a contract that was originally to repair and decommission some of the existing trails, but as we began to investigate, it was clear that an overall trail strategy for the park was needed.

As many of the authors and readers of this *Landscape | Paysages* issue will know, there is a distinct science and art to designing and building sustainable trails. In my experience, rarely does the sustainable trail follow the natural path a visitor will create on their own. We needed to find the right routes for visitors rather than try to formalize the ones they made.

We spent days in November 2020 roaming the area, ascending hills and running along ridges, mapping our routes, finding vistas



2



3



4



5



6

and stringing together points of interest. Through this time, we recognized there are areas where sustainable trails can be forged and areas where there was no hope to contain movement, places where we had to just let visitors roam. Back in the office, we drew out trail networks of varying intensity with graduated ratings of difficulty and roam zones where visitors could continue to find their own way up, over and around. This system would provide access to all types of users, from the bus load of tourists visiting for a few hours that need an easy 30-minute hike to the adventurers exploring all corners of the park over a weekend. We wanted to make a trail network as unique as the place it explored, to find ways visitors could experience the joy of movement in this incredible place, clamouring up and winding down hills in an intimate relationship with this fragile land.

Piecing It Together

Working with a land that is constantly shifting presented significant challenges. We could see that from the start where existing stairs had been washed out and blocked off. How could we build trails in this environment that would last? How could we allow visitors to safely traverse steep sections necessary to connect loops? How could we do this and not interfere with the beauty of the place? And how could we do this on a provincial park budget with readily available materials?

We developed a graduated trail system from easy/accessible to difficult/adventurous designed to industry standards with respect to average grades and maximum short grades with surfaces ranging from compacted granular and natural surfaces, and with features including bridges, stairs and ladders. This kit of parts allowed us to shape alignments with flexibility and work with the trail builders collaboratively in the field.

Controlling drainage and erosion are the critical factors to building sustainable trails in this environment. We addressed this with extensive trail dips to shed and dissipate water quickly and by devising a system for stairs and ladders that can be adjusted as needed. These simple adaptive design approaches allowed the network to be tailor fit to the land and for alignments to be refined in the field as the team absorbed the landscape during construction, getting



7

to know it intimately, and creatively shaping the visitor experience with features that feel discovered rather than installed.

What's Been Gained?

After construction, I heard that someone that was new to the park complained that the formalized trails were too designed. It got me wondering if we took something away from the wildness of the experience by providing a structure. But I didn't reflect too much on that. Providing safe access to these magical places for all is absolutely critical for all the reasons we know as landscape architects. I asked some of the attendants what they were hearing about the trails. They immediately pulled out a new trail map and were thrilled to tell me how many kilometres of trail were now available to explore and that warmed my heart.

Good design doesn't tame the wonder of nature; it brings it into focus. Good design for the trails in Dinosaur Provincial Park meant simplicity. We followed the land when we could and we contrasted it when it was necessary. Not that it was truly necessary, but we wanted to create an invitation for everyone to explore. To provide the little nudge to discover and connect with the landscape in this incredible part of the world. **LP**



8



9

3 LEVEL 1 TRAIL LEAVES FROM THE VISITOR CENTRE AND MUSEUM. **4** ROAMING THE HOODOO IN 2020 **5** THE LADDERS BRING ADVENTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY ALONG WITH SUSTAINABILITY TO THE TRAIL NETWORK AND PARK EXPERIENCES. **6** SCRAMBLING UP THE HOODOOS IS A FAVOURITE ACTIVITY FOR KIDS. ROAM ZONES WILL CONTINUE TO ALLOW THIS TO OCCUR WHILE THE LADDERS FOCUS MOVEMENT IN SENSITIVE AREAS. **7** HEAVILY TRAFFICKED AREA IN 2021 **8** NEWLY INSTALLED TRAILS LEADING INTO A ROAM ZONE **9** TRAIL MAP
PHOTOS 02



RACHAEL FITKOWSKI

HOPE AFTER DEVASTATION

Planning a Resilient Trail Network at Grand Bay West

1

> FR_LP+
L'ESPOIR APRÈS LA DESTRUCTION
Concevoir un Réseau de Sentiers Résilient à Grand Bay West

EN_

A Beach Oasis in Rocky Newfoundland

Grand Bay West is a protected natural area in the town of Channel-Port aux Basques, located on Newfoundland's southwest coast. It boasts picturesque views of the Table Mountains and the Cabot Strait, with a series of trails meandering through wetlands, rugged coastline and rare white sand beaches.

These beaches are a significant regional landscape feature, representing some of the finest examples of sand dune habitat in the province. Many waterfowl call this ecosystem home, including the endangered piping plover, which nests directly in the dunes.



2

Before September 2022, a beloved boardwalk stretched along First Beach. As the only developed walking trails in Channel-Port aux Basques, the network was immensely popular within the community of 4,000 people. While initially conceived as a tourism initiative to encourage ferry passengers traveling to and from Nova Scotia to extend their stay, the trails ultimately became an essential asset for residents. It was a space for daily exercise, stunning sunsets and a safe, fully accessible place to walk.

Devastation by Nature

When Hurricane Fiona made landfall as a post-tropical storm in 2022, the toll on the community was devastating and immediate. The storm brought record-breaking water levels, generating a 2.73-meter storm surge. Tragically, a life was lost, and the physical destruction was staggering: 85 homes were destroyed immediately, and another 57 were later slated for demolition due to their vulnerability to future storms.







3,4



5

Legend

New Bridge
New Crosswalk
Existing Parking at Kyle Lane
Wetlands
Town-owned Land

Zone A - Christopher's Path
Existing Boardwalk
Proposed Trail
Causeway Improvements
Existing Parking Area

Zone B - Hopedale Avenue Hub
Proposed Trail
Proposed Boardwalk
Lookout, Washrooms, and Interpretation
New Parking Area

Zone C - The Neck
Proposed Trail
Proposed Boardwalk
Informal Beach Trail (First and Second Beach)

Zone D - TRailway Connector
Proposed Trail
Proposed Boardwalk

In a matter of hours, the trail network at Grand Bay West was significantly damaged. The waves ripped wooden boardwalks and lookouts from their footings, tossing them far inland. Granular pathways washed into the sea, coastal ponds vanished under shifted sand, and the rolling sand dunes were flattened.

Rethinking the Rebuild

Recognizing that the loss of the trail left residents without a safe space for passive outdoor recreation, municipal staff prioritized recovery efforts. However, rather than rushing to rebuild in the exact same location, they engaged Mills & Wright Landscape Architecture in the spring of 2023 to develop a comprehensive plan for the entire network.

Community engagement was critical to establishing priorities for the new network. Feedback was gathered through an online survey, which received over 600 responses

1 THE BEACHES AT GRAND BAY WEST **2** SUNSET ON THE BOARDWALK **3** DESTRUCTION OF A FORMER LOOKOUT **4** HEADLINE FROM CBC NEWS **5** TRAIL NETWORK MAP
PHOTOS 1,3,5 MILLS & WRIGHT **2** TOWN OF CHANNEL – PORT AUX BASQUES **4** CBC NEWS



6

and community open house. The feedback made it clear that residents valued Grand Bay West as a deeply meaningful cultural landscape. Hearing residents who had lost their homes weep for the loss of the trail put the project into perspective. Our team quickly realized this was not merely a technical exercise in rerouting paths; we were tasked with respecting and rebuilding a profound emotional connection to the land.

Prior to our site visits, municipal staff had collected the displaced footings and broken remnants of the destroyed boardwalk, laying them out in a single area for future reuse or disposal. Seeing the physical fragments of the old trail gathered this way was incredibly moving. Walking the site, it was evident that the storm had fundamentally altered the landscape. The dunes had historically protected parts of the interior trails; with them gone, new environmental challenges emerged. The original trailhead, washroom septic field and parking lot now flooded regularly during high tide. These hazards were mapped to create a reference document for designing the new network.

It became undeniable that rebuilding along the historic route would be short-sighted. The scarred landscape remained highly vulnerable, and amid escalating climate change impacts, the area would inevitably face intense future storms.

Adaptation Pathways

To establish a robust rationale for relocating the trail, several climate adaptation resources were consulted, including *The Way Forward: On Climate Change in Newfoundland and Labrador; Coastal Change in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Handbook for Policy Makers and the Public;* and the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects' *Adaptation Primer Two.* These resources outline three primary strategic pathways for decision-makers facing climate risks: *Persist, Defer,* or *Migrate.*

The *Defer* approach was inapplicable, as ruinous damage had already occurred. The *Persist* approach was equally unfeasible; protecting the trail in its original location would require massive, cost-prohibitive sea walls. Furthermore, because the original boardwalk's robust concrete footings had been effortlessly displaced by the storm, there was little confidence that an engineered solution could guarantee protection.

With Defer and Persist ruled out, *Migrate* became the clear preferred strategy. The town was fortunate to own considerable land in the area, offering viable alternative corridors. Given that most of the infrastructure required a complete rebuild, it was logical to establish the new routes further inland and at higher elevations. This shift would shelter the trail from future storm surges, safeguarding the municipality's investment while giving the damaged coastal ecosystems the time and space to naturally heal and regenerate.

Planning the Network

Supported by staff and council, the *Migrate* approach informed a new master plan driven by the community's core guiding principles. The proposed network is divided into four distinct zones, each traversing a unique landscape:

- **Zone A** extends the existing Christopher's Path, creating a fully accessible looped route around the bay through wooded areas and barrens.
- **Zone B** introduces a new trailhead hub, allowing the vulnerable, flood-prone infrastructure to be safely decommissioned. This hub includes parking to accommodate residents and



7



8

ferry traffic, public washrooms and an interpretive lookout point.

- **Zone C** traces closer to the historic alignment, offering the familiar, beloved coastal and beach vistas but from a safer, elevated vantage point. Low-impact connector paths provide beach access without placing high-cost infrastructure directly in harm's way.
- **Zone D** provides a vital regional link, connecting Christopher's Path to a cross-province trail known as the T'Railway.

The plan also dictates low-impact construction methodologies. In ecologically sensitive or wet areas, boardwalks elevated on helical piles and timber cribbing are proposed to protect the terrain. To ensure accessibility, most of the trails are specified with compacted granular surfacing.

Fostering Hope

As the project progressed, it became obvious that our role as landscape architects extended beyond spatial planning – we were designing an opportunity for healing. The severe damage to this community had caused deep collective grief. People needed a dedicated space to reflect, process and remember.

This inspired the design of an interpretive walkway flanked by the salvaged concrete footings of the original boardwalk. These heavy, weathered remnants evoke the gravity of the loss the community endured. The walkway culminates at an elevated lookout showcasing panoramic views of the coast. This vantage point is intentionally designed to offer a sense of peace, resilience and gratitude for the enduring beauty of Grand Bay West.

Resilient Rebuilding

Public support at the final presentation was overwhelmingly positive. Residents saw their feedback directly reflected in the design and were deeply moved by the steps taken to preserve Grand Bay West as a vital cultural destination.

In the summer of 2025, the municipality successfully secured funding to construct Phase 1 of the network. Zone A was selected as the priority phase, immediately delivering a complete loop around the bay and restoring accessible outdoor recreation to the community.



9



10

Reflecting on this process, the Grand Bay West Trail Renewal Plan stands as a powerful precedent for small-scale, climate-adaptive coastal design. It demonstrates that even when resources are limited, small communities can take meaningful, visionary steps to safeguard their infrastructure and honor their cultural landscapes in an era of climate uncertainty. **LP**

Note: This project was recently featured as a CSLA landADAPT Case Study. For more information, please visit the CSLA Grand Bay West Case Study (www.csla-aapc.ca/mission-areas/grand-bay-west-trail-renewal).

6 THE BOARDWALK BEFORE DESTRUCTION **7,8** THE REMNANTS OF THE BOARDWALK **9** CONCRETE FOOTINGS FROM THE FORMER BOARDWALK, INTENTIONALLY INTEGRATED AS INTERPRETIVE FEATURES **10** PHASE 1 OF THE TRAIL CONSTRUCTED
PHOTOS 6 TRIPADVISOR, MARONWHEELS **7,8,9,10** MILLS & WRIGHT

LEILA TODD + TED UHRICH



SHARED TRAILS, DIFFERENT STORIES

1

> FR_LP+
UN SENTIER, DEUX RÉCITS

EN_
TWO PEOPLE CAN walk the same trail under the same sky and still bring entirely different weather with them – and that contrast is exactly what makes their teamwork compelling. One moves through the world with a quiet steadiness and one eye on the undergrowth. The other arrives with a spark, an intensity that turns every bird sighting into a discovery. Yet despite their differences, they follow the same grounding values: an admiration for nature and living with purpose.

When we came across the call for abstracts for Trails and Tribulations, we knew immediately that this was our next collaborative work, as sharing trail stories and photos has been the foundation of our friendship. This article is our responses to four questions within a mix of environmental autobiography and professional experience – the similarities and differences.

1 GRANULAR TRAIL ALONG PITT LAKE, PITT MEADOWS **2** WINTER TRAIL WITH KIDS 2021, BC
PHOTOS 1,2 LEILA TODD



Trails – Where Nature Meets Culture

Leila Todd, MLA (Guelph), BCSLA, currently lives and works in Coquitlam, BC, as a landscape architect and planner. Originally an immigrant from Iran, she also lived and worked in Ontario, gaining diverse Canadian experience. Her career blends design and community-focused planning to deliver impactful civic assets. Her passion for nature conservation and access to the outdoors has motivated her to continuously learn, grow and explore new ideas.

I was born in northeastern Iran, where some of my favourite early childhood memories involve exploring hills and mountain edges with my family in search of natural streams, grape hyacinths and ziziphora for tea. As a teenager in Tehran, I spent countless hours hiking the foothills of the Alborz Mountains with my older brother, where I encountered a different side of life – unsanctioned use of trails in which women, seemed free of head covers, more active and less constrained by the oversight that was dominant within the city. When my family immigrated to Canada, I experienced both culture and nature shock, but the natural world quickly became a refuge. Settling on the traditional and ancestral territories of the kʷikʷəƛ̓əm First Nation was an incredible gift; the views of the Fraser River, the annual salmon run and the nesting black bears in the urban forests deepened my connection to this place. This lifelong relationship with nature guided my career and inspired me to study biology, followed by landscape architecture and urban forestry.



2



Let's Go Shred the 'Burbs!

Ted Uhrich, BLA (UBC), BCSLA, currently lives and works in Vancouver, BC. After a "dirty start" in landscape construction, Ted moved into municipal parks planning and registered as a landscape architect in 2007. Despite a deep appreciation for site-specific design, Ted's career has transitioned to systems-based planning and now focuses on park acquisition across the regional parks system in Metro Vancouver. Still, he gets out into the forest regularly looking for nettles, salmonberries and mushrooms.



1



2

I grew up on Vancouver's North Shore in the 70s, which some might say was a long time ago! At that time, the four-lane Highway 1 was about 10 years old and had cut a diagonal swath across the community. As a result, there were triangles of remnant forest as well as gravel slopes and construction staging areas being populated by alder and other pioneer species through neglect rather than intent. There was even a mass of knotweed that felt like a tropical jungle for the four-foot-tall me. We lived one block below the highway; my earliest memories are following tunnel-like trails through cedar, alder and knotweed along the fill banks and cut slopes below the highway. You could follow them for miles, or kilometres as we transitioned to metric in the 70s, which seems like a lifetime ago! I loved the adventure of disappearing into a wall of vegetation and emerging blocks away in another neighbourhood. Were we trespassing? Maybe – but often we were on roads or utility ROWs, rarely in parkland.

Growing up like that, it was inevitable that I morphed into a dedicated trail runner. Even though I don't live there anymore, I still get back to the "Shore" to run its trails. I feed off the "positive" feedback loop of Strava and a multitude of trail apps to plan and log every outing. I pore over maps and splits before and after but let my mind go empty when I run. I choose unintentional rifts in the suburban, cul-de-sac neighbourhoods designed for car culture. Where streams and natural features have interrupted the flow of vehicles, the link between street ends through the meager natural area remaining between and behind houses. More recently, a trail running friend coined the term "shred portals." When we set out and finish our trail runs, we follow the shred portals to the formal trail heads. We disappear between houses, into the dark forest, follow an improvised trail over logs and boulders and reappear, trying to act casual, not creepy. As the years have gone on, my "shredding" has slowed, but these places remain my favourites: portals with a cheat code to move faster than cars through suburban neighbourhoods.

In my previous work, I had the opportunity to work on planning open space networks in new neighbourhoods. Using riparian

1 LYNN VALLEY PORTAL **2** GABRIOLA ISLAND MEADOW LINE
PHOTOS 1,2 TED UHRICH



3

Trails play a significant role in my life, serving three distinct but equally important purposes. First, they provide a personal refuge through solo walks. I typically use trails along the forest edges and closer to the neighbourhoods. The presence of other trail users – dog walkers, cyclists and fellow walkers – offers a welcome sense of security. Second, trails are an important part of my social life. I value connection, community and spending time with people I care about; some of my most meaningful conversations have taken place while walking in nature.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I hike the trails with my family. I understand the benefits of nature for children's development; I want my daughters to maintain a lifelong connection to the outdoors. Research suggests that girls often become less involved in sports, parks and outdoor recreation as they grow older. I hope regular time on the trails will help them feel comfortable and confident in natural spaces throughout their lives. Most of the time they are enthusiastic companions, although I occasionally hear a dramatic, "No, Mom! Not another mushroom!" when I stop to admire something interesting along the way.



4

I have had the opportunity to contribute to several trail-related projects over the years, each offering valuable lessons about planning, community engagement and environmental stewardship. One project involved leading the development of a master plan that was largely driven by the advocacy and persistence of a local stewardship group. Their dedication to both the trail and their community was remarkable; their positive, collaborative relationship with municipal staff helped advance improvements that might otherwise have been dismissed as unsanctioned activities or maintenance concerns. A key challenge was helping residents understand the significant water utility infrastructure located under much of the trail corridor. While community members had many creative ideas for enhancements and tree planting, underground constraints limited what was feasible. Detailed cross-sectional drawings illustrating both below- and above-ground conditions proved to be an effective communication tool and reinforced the important role landscape architects play in translating technical information into accessible concepts.

Another project involved developing a trail adjacent to a prominent place of worship, where the organization's leader strongly supported routing the trail along their property in the hope that increased public activity would help discourage an unhoused encampment that had formed nearby. The project highlighted how trails can become intertwined with broader social and community issues.

One of the most technically complex projects I worked on was a 400-metre trail connection between a neighbourhood and a park. Despite its modest length, the site contained a natural stream, a wetland, endangered butternut trees and several areas of archaeological significance, requiring extensive studies, permits and multiple alignment iterations. Ultimately, we identified a route that respected the site's environmental and cultural sensitivities while meeting the project's objectives, demonstrating how even a small trail project can involve considerable problem-solving and careful balancing of competing priorities.

When thinking about trail planning and development, I always begin with two fundamental questions: "Why?" and "Who?" Before planning or building anything, it is essential to understand the need and establish a clear rationale. Without one, there is a tendency to continue expanding access simply because it is possible, often reflecting social and economic values that prioritize expansion over long-term collective well-being. Equally important is understanding who benefits from access and who may be excluded. Trails should be planned to create opportunities for as many people as possible to experience nature, with accessibility and inclusion considered from the outset, even when sites present technical challenges. After addressing these foundational questions, attention must turn to understanding the site itself through both biophysical and cultural lenses. One aspect that is often overlooked is archaeology, largely because it can be complex, time-consuming, and difficult to navigate. However, archaeological assessments are responsible planning and establishing the cultural heritage can make the project more meaningful and reduce project risks.

3 TREE TUNNEL TRAIL, MUNDY PARK, COQUITLAM
4 BOARDWALK TRAIL, MUNDY PARK, COQUITLAM
PHOTOS 3,4 LEILA TODD



3

and terrestrial ecosystem studies, we planned where future parks were going to be located and also identified appropriate locations for future, sanctioned trails. Often, existing unsanctioned trails were great clues and indicators on desire lines and hidden gems for access to nature. More recently, my work on expanding the regional park system directly relies on knowing where the unsanctioned, existing trails occur. While unconventional, I use the AllTrails app in my planning work to see existing connections and ground truth future trails. I'm not as interested in the wide, dashed lines of formal trails. I look for the tiny, dotted lines when you zoom way in. And yes, I need glasses as I get older. Those faint lines I squint over are the best opportunity to plan a new, formal trail network. No amount of planning replicates knowing and respecting desire lines in landscapes. Do they need to be closed sometimes due to damage to sensitive ecosystems? Absolutely! But ignoring them doesn't make them go away.

As a "seasoned" professional, I can share a few lessons learned over 25 years in parks planning. First and foremost, get out into nature and shred at any speed. Firsthand knowledge of the landscape is essential to planning an achievable trail system. Next, enlist experts to inventory, analyze and prioritize protection of natural systems. After that, leverage every possible partnership to achieve a complete network. Work with biologists, drainage engineers, transportation engineers, land use planners, non-profits, neighbours and (even) developers to get appropriately sited trails on plans and get them built.

But keep trails set back from private property. Nobody wants a creepy old landscape architect staring over their back fence, planning the next shred portal. **LP**



4



5

3 FISHERMAN'S TRAIL **4** DEEP COVE "BRIDGE" **5** MAPLE RIDGE SUNRISE
PHOTOS 3,4,5 TED UHRICH



ALAN OTTERBEIN

MEEWASIN'S UNIQUE TRAIL AMENITIES

1

> FR_LP+ LES ATTRAITS DES SENTIERS DE MEEWASIN

EN_

THE MEEWASIN VALLEY, recognized in the CSLA's Cultural Landscapes Legacy Collection, is the South Saskatchewan river valley corridor's preeminent public space. The Meewasin Valley Project, the 100 Year Conceptual Master Plan (1979), provided a baseline for the work that the Meewasin Valley Authority continues to undertake.



2

One of the most visible and accessible components of Meewasin is its trail network – over 100 km built since 1979, and more planned for the future, along with ongoing upgrades to existing trails. Inherent to this network are its amenities – providing places to rest, talk, eat, rejuvenate and experience the Meewasin Valley.

As new trail projects and enhancements started gaining momentum (i.e., funding) in the past 10 years, we had a challenge to address – the legacy of trail amenities. Every past trail project came with a unique set of amenities – leaving us now with a wide and inconsistent assortment of amenity styles in varying condition. We set out to change this approach with a goal to develop amenities that are unique to Meewasin: a durable, consistent and recognizable suite, with a shared language and materiality.

Signage

We started with wayfinding signage. After exploring design ideas and working with a local fabricator, two types were developed – our primary and secondary trailheads. For materials we chose sandblasted steel, which develops a rust patina: a durable and infinitely recyclable option. The maps are all locally printed on Dibond®, which can be easily removed for updates. With a graffiti resistant coating applied they are also easy to clean. Originally the primary was surface mounted to a concrete base, however we now typically install them on two screw piles. The smaller, secondary signs are surface mounted to concrete pads. We have now developed a third tier – tertiary wayfinding signs which are simple Dibond® signs on a post or attached to an existing pole.

The next type of signage to be developed will be km markers (first installs planned for 2027), smaller, with similar aesthetics to the wayfinding signs, again using sandblasted steel with Dibond® inserts. A taller interpretation of the km marker has now been employed for the first time in 2026: feature lights along a prominent section of new downtown trail. Standing about nine feet tall, these each have two custom designed back-lit cutout panels.

Interpretive signs provide informal educational opportunities. Once again, the bases are sandblasted steel. The signs themselves are made of 3/8-inch-thick aluminum, with the graphics printed on the surface (using a local print company).

Site Furniture

Bench, and chair development followed a similar, local design and fabrication process – the choice here was powder-coated steel (smoother to the touch), and wood seat and back. Previously we had sourced benches from a US supplier with Ipe wood (a Brazilian hardwood). We looked for a wood source closer to home and tested both thermally modified wood



3



4



5



6



7

and Kebony in our first season. Both have performed well; however, we found the thermally modified wood easier overall to work with and sourced from eastern Canada. We now produce both armed and armless versions to provide support and access for as many users as possible.

Trash receptacle design development has evolved the most of all, in particular in relation to operational considerations regarding side access vs top access. The first recommendation from field staff was for a side opening unit, and a year later (and perhaps after asking different people), the preference changed, and top loading was requested. Combined with a few hinge issues, and we are now on version 3, and have retrofits to do on earlier versions.

Consistent Branding

All amenities now incorporate consistent branding – "Meewasin" text and logo, either in relief or cutout. Locations for donor recognition are also standardized and incorporated on all items, in support of the donor program and any active capital campaigns.

As we continue to roll out these amenities, we also have enhanced our abilities back-of house to map and manage the database with in-house survey and GIS support. A Field Maps app is available for staff using their phones, for easy access to maps and attributes in the field. Amenity type, photos, condition and donor information are all available.

There are 630 benches, 346 trash receptacles and 129 interpretive signs in the Meewasin Valley. We have currently switched out just over 10% of these units – so a complete transition will take some time. We know and understand that there will be an ongoing evolution as we continue to learn and adjust. Things could change as we work through a brand refresh (currently underway), or we are designated as a National Urban Park.

Our goals are being reached with a home-grown solution: using our in-house expertise and capacity, while working with local suppliers, to create amenities that are uniquely Meewasin's. **LP**

1 VIEW OF SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER AND DOWNTOWN SASKATOON **2** PRIMARY TRAILHEAD SIGN IN VICTORIA PARK **3** CLOSE UP VIEW OF MEEWASIN URBAN CHAIR **4** FEATURE LIGHTS ALONG THE PROMENADE IN KIWANIS MEMORIAL PARK **5** VERSION 2 OF MEEWASIN'S URBAN TRASH RECEPTACLE **6** CLOSE UP OF MEEWASIN BRANDING ON THE URBAN BENCH **7** INTERPRETIVE SIGN ON THE HISTORY OF KIWANIS MEMORIAL PARK
PHOTOS MEEWASIN



1

PETER SOLAND

KINA8AT'S FIL ROUGE TRAIL

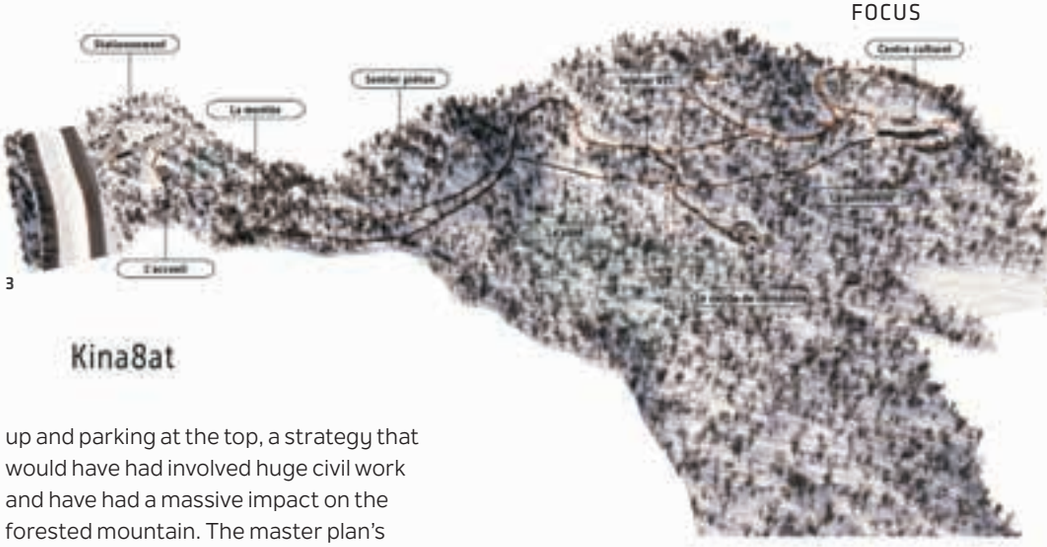
> **FR_LP+** LE SENTIER FIL ROUGE DE KINA8AT

EN_
FOUNDED IN 2013 by hereditary Anicinape Chief T8aminik (Dominique) Rankin and Marie-Josée Tardif, Kina8at Ensemble (www.kina8at.ca/en) is an Indigenous Tourism Centre based in La Conception, in the Quebec Laurentians. It is dedicated to promoting the discovery of all Indigenous cultures while encouraging reconciliation, personal healing and reconnection with oneself and nature. Dominique Rankin is a survivor of the residential school system. Through its activities, Kina8at acts as a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, sharing traditions in a spirit of openness, collective healing and respectful cohabitation.

The site is a large, forested lot, quite mountainous with lake access and 31 documented waterways and wetlands. Rock outcrops and erratic rocks are frequent, as are beautiful tree specimens. Existing infrastructure includes a gravel access road from the village, prospector tents for meetings, teachings, dining and lodging, a sweat lodge and many low-key site improvements done over the past 12 years, respectful of the site's natural beauty. With a growing interest in Indigenous philosophy and heritage, the current project will enable Kina8at to grow into a larger cultural destination. The new infrastructure will create a structured, sustainable and accessible environment designed in harmony with the spiritual and ecological values of First Peoples.

New Projects

The current project consists of building a cultural centre, a welcoming pavilion and outdoor infrastructure including pathways, a ceremonial circle, a symbolic footbridge



3

and parking. A second phase would develop the well-being centre, additional ready-to-camp installations and further discovery trails. Civiliti and landscape architect François Courville were brought in to help Kina8at shape the site's overall development. Kanva's, the architects commissioned for the two buildings, first mission was to help site them in the territory. The firm took an active role in understanding and communicating the project as a fuller experience of the larger environment.

For landscape architects, one of the master plan's primary aims was to showcase the site's natural qualities and define lighter-on-landscape strategies, principles and design guidelines. Beyond the spatial planning, the master plan establishes goals for reducing the physical and carbon footprint of all new installations, as well as responsible water, energy and waste disposal strategies. Guidelines address soil management, vegetation and materials. Kina8at's future operations will continue to respect the highest environmental goals.

The Story of the Master Plan

Prior to civiliti's and Courville's mandate, the cultural centre was imagined at the top of the mountain with a roadway winding up and parking at the top, a strategy that would have had involved huge civil work and have had a massive impact on the forested mountain. The master plan's first goal was to shape a much more subtle strategy rooted in a sensitive reading of the site, its relationship to its larger environment, Kina8at's existing infrastructure and a minimal impact on the natural environment. The work was grounded in a survey and understanding of the territory's physical characteristics and qualities.

The plan first differentiates between a private, more intimate area of the site (for smaller groups spending several days on site) and the public, daily accessible areas with the cultural centre as a main destination. For those individuals and groups undertaking a reconciliation ritual and/or spending a few days undertaking a well-being process at Kina8at, access is provided to the site from the local village road and private drive. The more intimate area of the site, which includes access to the lake and the sweat lodge, enables Kina8at to pursue its deep involvement with individuals and groups, Indigenous or not, seeking rich moments of communion and teaching in a remote, forested environment.

For the new, daily groups, access is provided directly from Route 117, the main Laurentian parkway. A naturalized parking area and the welcoming pavilion greet the visitors. A kilometer-long path – the Fil Rouge trail – leads from the parking lot up the mountain, around and over wetlands toward the cultural centre. Subtle lighting design, wayfinding components and integrated scenography are being built

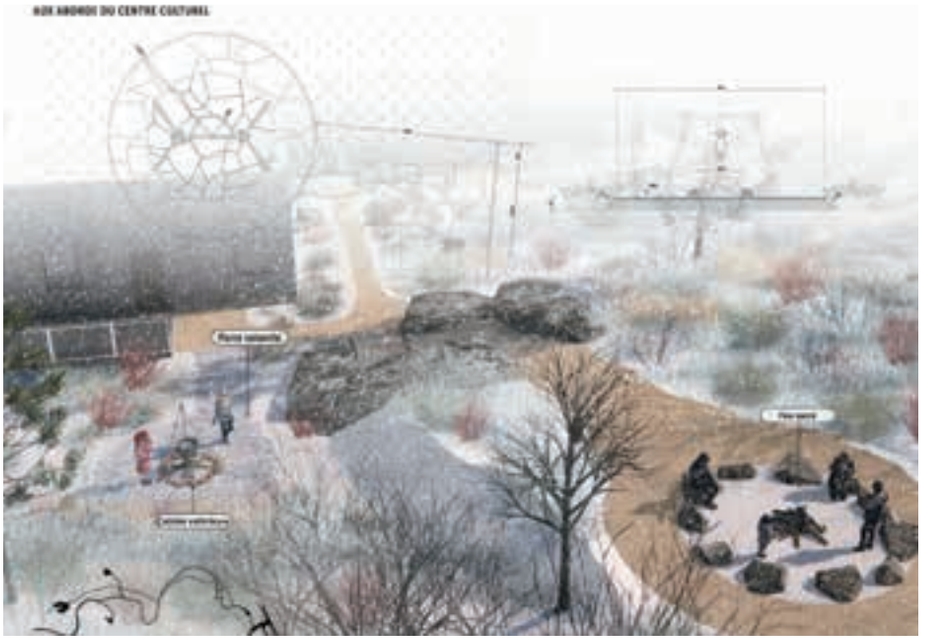
1 SKETCH OF THE ASHUKAN FOOTBRIDGE OVER THE MAIN KINA8AT VALLEY **2** ILLUSTRATION OF THE FIL ROUGE AND ATV TRAILS **3** CLOSE UP OF THE ASHUKAN FOOTBRIDGE, CIRCLE OF CEREMONY AND CULTURAL CENTRE
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF civiliti + COURVILLE



2



4



5



6

into the path design. Universal accessibility is addressed through the creation of a secondary ATV trail. In fact, the foot and ATV trails are woven together through a sensitive study of the site's topography and natural barriers. Where possible, the ATV trail takes advantage of old logging trails still visible through the forest, which ensures minimal deforestation. The ATV trail affords safe travel for the community's elders and all people with disabilities to the circle of ceremony and cultural centre. Kina8at's innovative approach to universal accessibility in a forest environment finds resolution in personal attention to special needs.

The cultural centre is placed at the junction of the intimate and public areas, creating opportunities for Kina8at to continue to offer multiple types of experiences. The division is not watertight – clienteles are free to move across the entire territory – but it ensures a bipolar operation from both ends of the elongated site. The two distinct, yet complementary, entrances offer advantages in flexibility and operation. The cultural centre, for example, is located in such a way as to take advantage of the service road from La Conception for delivery and emergency vehicles access. Or again, the parking lot on Route 117 can serve long-term clientele heading to the more private area of the site.

The Fil Rouge Trail

The idea of connecting the parking and the cultural centre by a path experience through the forest was a big departure for Kina8at and its Elders Committee as it required rethinking conventional wisdom about parking and accessibility. However, it was quickly embraced as a foundational part of Kina8at's commitment to offering a fuller experience of land and mother earth. Our own early embrace of Kina8at's philosophy was witnessing the power of landscape and landscape narratives to change minds and rewire commonplaces.

In Indigenous cultures, the concept of Fil Rouge – literally a red thread – has come to represent the unifying, unbroken spiritual theme that connects each individual to his or her past, present and future, the natural world and the community. Hence, the concept of the Fil Rouge trail anchors the path and the experience through the forest as a precious component of Kina8at's

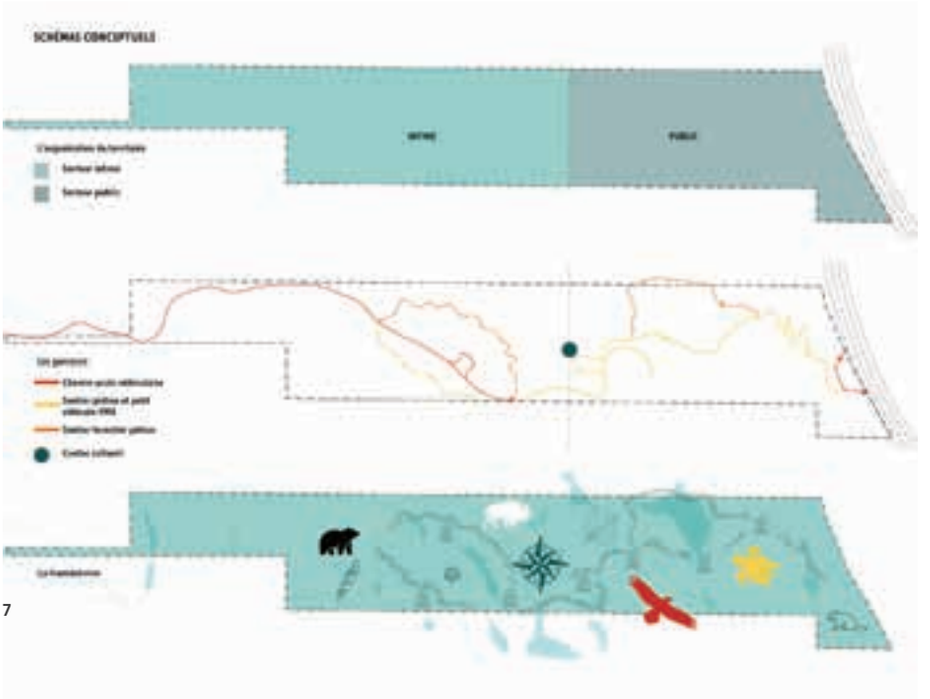
philosophy of intergenerational and cultural transmission.

Hence, the experience Kina8at is not limited to a museum visit and a walk in the forest; it is understood as an initiation journey, a progression through the territory and landscape which, through effort and moments of communion with the environment, initiates and paces a process of understanding the centre's core values.

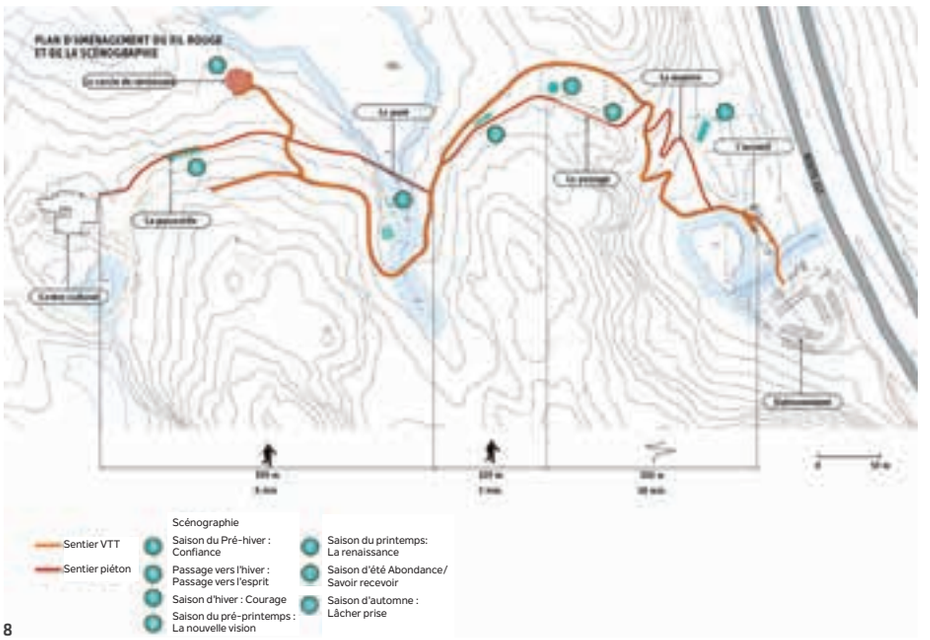
The master plan details five stages along the Fil Rouge trail that punctuate the path for moments and amenities of contemplation and introspection:

- the welcoming pavilion as Threshold, a liminal moment and passage into the forest;
- the Appeasement Deck at the summit of the mountain, a place for reprieve and open views;
- the Crossing of the Ashukan, the footbridge spanning the valley and a symbol of the fuller experience of connection;
- the Circle of Ceremony, a rustic-designed gathering space integrated into a delicately cleared glade of the forest; and
- the Cultural Centre itself, a new and unique community space understood as part and parcel of the path and the culmination of the journey.

A testament to Kina8at's commitment to Quebec's native ecosystem, building the Fil Rouge trail and the circle of ceremony will be partially realized through a co-construction and mentorship program for young Indigenous groups.



7



8

Turtle Walk

At the trailhead of the Fil Rouge, in the immediate environment of the welcoming pavilion threshold, 11 small mounds emerge from the ground plane. They represent each of Quebec's 11 Indigenous nations. Named the Turtle Walk (allée des Tortues), these mounds taken together offer a welcoming that establishes Kina8at's open philosophy towards all nations. The plan is to invite each of the 11 Indigenous communities to provide a unique sculpture to top each mound. With stone steps and native planting, these enigmatic and landscaped turtle backs are simple reminders of the fundamental value First Nations place on the respect and care for nature, land and all living beings.

A Path Rather Than a Destination

Kina8at's cultural centre is poised to become a beautiful Laurentian destination for anyone seeking a better understanding of the strong, social and environmental values of Quebec's Indigenous communities. Its permanent content, temporary exhibit program and culinary hall will become a welcome addition to the area's cultural offerings. The centre's architectural concept has already been recognized by both *Canadian Architect* and *AZURE* magazines.

Notwithstanding that expectancy of quality, it's commonplace in many philosophies to value process over finality, journey over destination. The Fil Rouge trail is that journey, an experience and a celebration of land and it has become part and parcel of Kina8at's cultural program. Whatever the destination, there is no tribulation here. **LP**

4 THE LARGER KINA8AT TERRITORY **5** LANDSCAPE COMPONENTS AT THE EDGE OF THE CULTURAL CENTRE **6** CIRCLE OF CEREMONY **7** CONCEPTUAL PLANNING OF THE SITE **8** FIL ROUGE TRAIL
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF civiliti + COURVILLE

PASCALE ROZADA

IMPROVING STEEP TRAILS IN GROUSE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

1

> FR_LP+
AMÉLIORATION DES SENTIERS ESCARPÉS DU PARC RÉGIONAL GROUSE MOUNTAIN

EN_

GROUSE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL Park was created in 2017 to protect 75 hectares of steep, mixed conifer forest in North Vancouver and provide incredible recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. This park, previously part of a local watershed, is home to the Grouse Grind and the British Columbia Mountaineering Club (BCMC), popular and challenging local trails in themselves that are also used to access the North Shore Mountains backcountry for longer trips.

Metro Vancouver faced challenges to improve and maintain these well-used trails because of the steep terrain and their popularity. The team had to be creative when developing strategies to limit impacts on visitors, scheduling work during optimal conditions, hiring skilled contractors and facilitating construction on remote sites.

Popular Trails Close to the City

With close to 500,000 visitors annually, the Grouse Grind Trail and the BCMC Route withstand considerable use. Grouse Mountain Regional Park is part of the Coast Mountains and is influenced by the area's geology, climate, topography and history. The forested slopes are steep, with scattered bedrock outcrops and bluffs. Both trails ascend about 800 metres over less than three kilometres, making them a well-loved workout for locals and a world-renowned destination for visitors. Park visitors experience second-growth forests with riparian corridors and a large patch of old-growth forest. The ecosystems here have significant ecological value, supporting a variety of species and ecosystems at risk.

With this heavy use, significant trail work was needed to deal with erosion and trail braiding. In 2021, as part of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – a partnership with the governments of Canada and British Columbia – Metro Vancouver received $3.5 million in funding for improvements to Grouse Mountain Regional Park. The project enhanced park access, visitor safety and ecological protection. Upgrades included a revamped

2





6

trailhead and almost five kilometres of trail improvements, completing the vision set out in the park management plan.

Management planning is the foundation of most of the work at Metro Vancouver, and this process was the outcome of years of public and stakeholder consultation, as well as engagement with First Nations. This participation was bolstered by environmental assessments to identify sensitive ecosystems to protect and enhance while also identifying opportunities for park development.

Technical Trail Building in Steep Mountainous Terrain

Backcountry trail development requires a tailored approach due to limited accessibility and the sensitivity of the terrain. A site-specific strategy was developed to address practical construction needs, protection of the natural environment, natural aesthetics and the visitor experience.

The landscape architect led a multidisciplinary team of operations staff, natural resource management specialists and engineers to establish construction guidelines for trails at the park.

Key principles include:

- **Reuse of on-site materials:** Borrow pits were identified to source native soils for infill where needed. Available boulders were incorporated into trail design, particularly for constructing durable rock steps.
- **Drainage management:** Water bars were integrated into the trail design to effectively divert runoff and reduce erosion.
- **Natural material use:** Rough-cut yellow-cedar and redcedar were specified for step construction where required, maintaining both durability and a natural appearance.

Because of the steep terrain, materials (wood, nails, toolboxes, pre-fabricated bridges) were flown in by helicopter. Contractors had to start their day hiking up the trail – sometimes all the way near the top – before beginning work.

Watch this video about the challenging trail construction (vimeo.com/961735030).

Managing Visitor Use

A key aspect of this work was to complete the improvements while limiting the impact on visitors. To accomplish this goal, work was phased so that the re-route sections would be completed before closing the eroded sections for re-naturalization. This meant no disruption to the public for most of the year. Full closure of the Grouse Grind was limited to a few weeks in October, after high summer visitation and before winter, corresponding to the annual closure due to snow.

In addition, a strong communications plan meant that users were informed through various channels and media well in advance of necessary closures, and the reasons behind the work were shared with them, increasing public support.

Metro Vancouver also worked closely with partners such as Grouse Mountain Resort to help with trail closure notifications and temporary re-routes. The resort installed a timer on the BCMC Route while the Grouse Grind was closed so that users could continue to track their performance on this alternative trail.

This considerable background work, planning, coordination, discussion and procurement ahead of time was pivotal to the success of this project.

Time and Dedication Lead to Success

The improvement project was completed in 2025 and included the construction of new access trails and viewpoints. Accomplishing the Grouse Grind Trail and BCMC Route improvements was a multi-year process that involved multiple staff at Metro Vancouver. It took time and dedication to achieve the project on time and on budget. Through this work, Metro Vancouver fulfilled its role by protecting natural resources of the area and enhancing access to nature for residents and visitors of the region. **LP**

1 ERODED TRAIL **2** ENTRANCE TRAIL UPGRADED WITH STEPS AND WATER BARS **3** TRAIL CONSTRUCTION **4** HELICOPTER TRANSPORTATION OF MATERIALS **5** GROUSE GRIND STEPS FILLED WITH LOCAL MATERIAL AND EARTH RETENTION FEATURES **6** NEW VIEWPOINT

PHOTOS 1 ROBYN WORSCESTER **2** ROB SCHMIDT **3** PASCALE ROZADA **4** CANDACE NG **5** ROB SCHMIDT **6** TAYLOR MCINTOSH

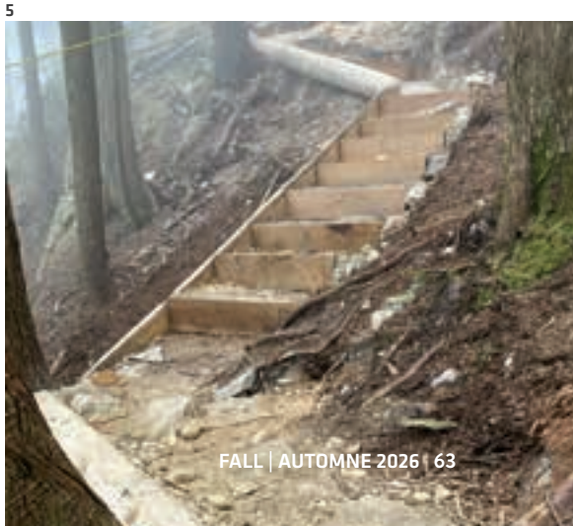
3



4



5





MASONRY STUDIO

Specifying Clay Pavers Just Got Seamless.

From expansive streetscapes to personalized residential retreats, Belden Brick's Masonry Studio gives you the freedom to visualize and specify from our full range of Belden Clay Pavers in real time. You can export high-resolution textures for Revit and CAD, enabling you to bring your ambitious hardscape designs to life with technical precision. **Explore Masonry Studio today.**

www.beldenbrick.com | 330-456-0031 | *The Standard of Comparison Since 1885*

BELDEN
THE BELDEN BRICK COMPANY
COMMERCIAL | RESIDENTIAL | PAVING

Bike Security Solutions For A Lifetime



MADRAX
Bicycle Security

800.448.7931 | madrax.com

landADAPT: BUILDING A CLIMATE-READY PROFESSION

HOPE PARNHAM

EN_

WHEN CSLA LAUNCHED landADAPT: Landscape Architects Navigating and Designing for Adaptation in 2024, the goal was straightforward: build capacity within the landscape architecture community to meet the growing demands of climate adaptation and biodiversity. Two years later, the numbers tell a compelling story.

With generous support from Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) Climate Adaptation Program, landADAPT has delivered three interconnected components: a national webinar series, an adaptation case study series and a new online professional development course. Together, they represent one of the most ambitious professional development initiatives undertaken by the CSLA.

A Webinar Series That Exceeded All Expectations

The landADAPT webinar series wrapped up this spring, and by almost any measure, it surpassed what we set out to do. Thirteen webinars. Twenty expert guest speakers and five guest moderators. Sixteen and a half hours of free professional development, offered with live closed-caption translations.

The reach was remarkable. Over 4,400 landscape architects, students and allied professionals attended our sessions across the series, an average of 330 per event – and two sessions exceeded the 500-person capacity of our Zoom platform. Since posting the recordings, they have been viewed over 2,000 times and counting. Perhaps most meaningful: post-webinar surveys showed that 95% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, 91% reported improved understanding of the topic, and 85% said they were likely to apply what they learned in their practice. That last figure is the one that matters most.

Stories from the Field

The landADAPT case study series (www.csla-aapc.ca/mission-areas/landadapt-case-study-series), led by environmental communications consultant Sabrina Careri, brought the program's themes to life by highlighting the work of landscape architects across Canada. Projects spanning a range of scales and regions were documented and shared, and all are now featured on Environment and Climate Change Canada's Map of Adaptation Actions (changingclimate.ca/map/) and Nature Canada's National Project Map of Nature-based Climate Solutions (naturecanada.ca/defend-nature/how-you-help-us-take-action/nature-based-climate-solutions/national-project-map/). These projects have also become a practical resource for CSLA's ongoing federal advocacy, offering concrete, Canadian examples of how the profession contributes to climate resilience.

What Comes Next

With the NRCan funding period drawing to a close, landADAPT enters a new chapter rather than an ending. The webinar archive, the case study series and the online course

Our New Online Course

The third and final component of landADAPT is something we are particularly proud of: a new online professional development course developed in partnership with the Climate Risk Institute and a dedicated group of CSLA volunteers. The course covers foundational climate knowledge, carbon accounting and climate positive design, biodiversity by design, strategies for flooding and heat resilience, and systems thinking – and is available in English and French.

This program would not exist without the extraordinary commitment of CSLA's volunteer community. In the past year alone, volunteers logged over 400 in-kind hours contributing to the landADAPT program across the webinar series, case study development and course content review. That depth of engagement demonstrates our profession's genuine interest to lead on climate action. On behalf of the CSLA Board and Staff, thank you for your contribution to this valuable project.

To register for the online course, visit the Climate Risk Institute's learning platform at climateriskinstitute.edunao.com, log in to create a free account, and search for landADAPT (English) or ADAPTerre (French) to enroll. A certificate of completion is available at the end of the course for those tracking their professional development hours.



1

remain available as living resources on our website (www.csla-aapc.ca/career-resources/landadapt) for the profession. CSLA's Committee on Climate Action and Biodiversity continues to explore how the case study collection can grow, and the resource library launched alongside the course will continue to expand.

Equally important is what this program has built beyond its deliverables: a network of relationships with allied professions, research institutions and experts in practice that strengthened every aspect of landADAPT. Those partnerships are not ending with the program, and we expect them to continue generating opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing in the years ahead. There is more to come, and we look forward to continuing this work with members across the country.

We are deeply grateful to Natural Resources Canada for the support that made landADAPT possible, and to every speaker, moderator, case study contributor, course reviewer and participant who gave their time and expertise to this program. **LP**



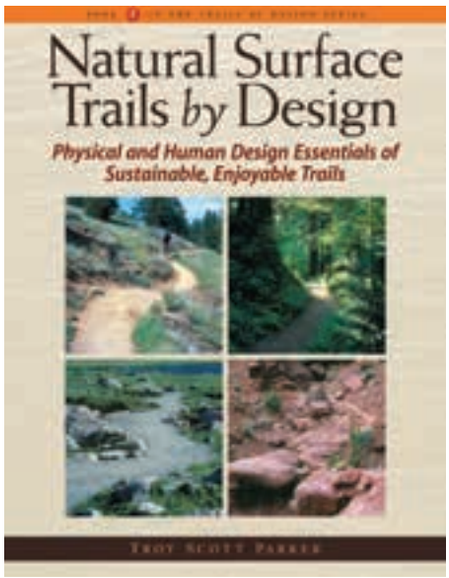
Hope Parnham, *APALA, FCSLA, is the Manager of Advocacy and Strategic Affairs for the CSLA.*

1 THIS COLLAGE WAS CREATED FROM THE IMAGES OF ALL THE PROJECTS FEATURED IN THE LANDADAPT CASE STUDY SERIES.

BOOKS ON TRAILS

PATRICK BEECH, DANIEL SCOTT + KEVIN FRASER

Here's a list of resources we recommend as the foundation of any landscape architect's trails library



Natural Surface Trails by Design – Physical and Human Design Essentials of Sustainable, Enjoyable Trails

By Troy Scott Parker

NATURESHAPE LLC, 2004

At only 80 pages, this book punches well above its weight in terms of the value per page for the content found within. Focused on explaining both the impacts a trail setting has on our behaviour as well as how our behaviour impacts a trail's surface, it creates a framework for professionals to use in order to diagnose an issue and develop contextually specific solutions. Available only at naturshape.com.

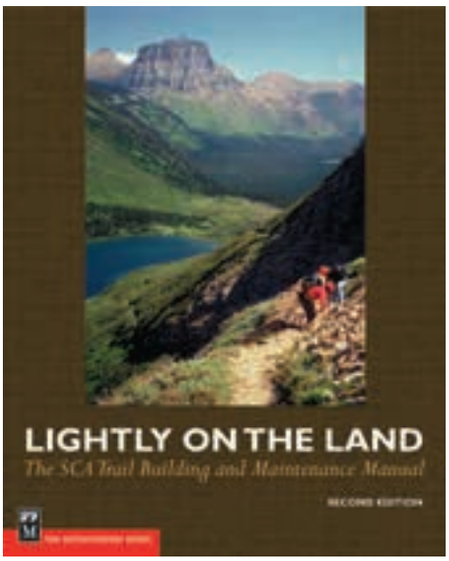


Trails Design and Management Handbook

By Troy Scott Parker

NATURESHAPE LLC, 1995

Arguably one of the most comprehensive municipal trail standards and guidelines ever produced, this resource does a superb job of outlining the full spectrum of trail types that one might find within a community setting, providing detailed information on trail design, construction specifications and maintenance expectations. Available only at naturshape.com.



Lightly on the Land – The SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual, 2nd Edition

By Bob Birkby & The Student Conservation Association

MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS, 2006

This 340-page tome brimming with beautiful black line illustrations is a must have for folks looking to learn more about the full spectrum of techniques used in the development backcountry trails. With an emphasis on manual labour, this book highlights what can be accomplished with a bit of Old-World craftsmanship and ingenuity.



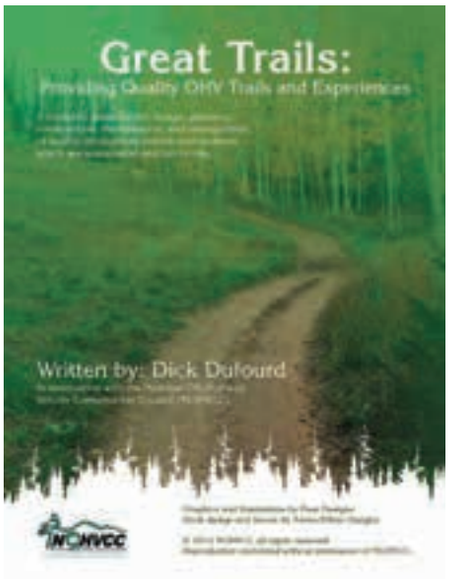


Mountain Bike Trail Development – Guidelines for Successfully Managing the Process

By Jake Carsten

IMBA, 2023

Intended to provide a high- level understanding of mountain bike trail development so that land managers are able to manage the process and communicate knowledgeably with stakeholders, partners, trail contractors, trail users, and advocates, this resource is equally helpful to landscape architects getting involved in projects which include mountain biking trail users.

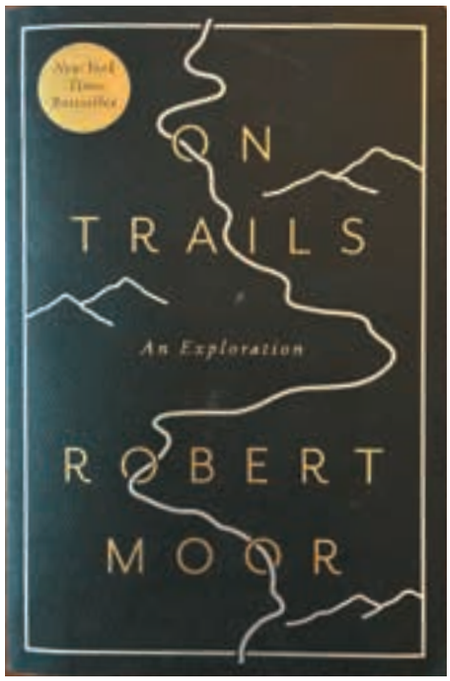


Great Trails – Providing Quality OHV Trails and Experiences

By Dick Dufourd

NATIONAL OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE CONSERVATION COUNCIL, 2016

Produced as a counterpart to the International Mountain Bicycling Association's series of trail books designed for user groups and land managers alike, Great Trails provides insight into how trail planning, design and construction for motorized recreational users is both the same and how it differs in an easy to read, comprehensive format.



On Trails: An Exploration

By Robert Moor

SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2016

An inherently curious investigator, Robert Moor takes the reader on a rigorously scientific and philosophical journey. Inspired by a formative experience on the Appalachian Trail, he shares findings from a deep dive into the meaning, origins, and soul of trails. The breadth of Moor's study knows few bounds, as he waxes poetic about myriad forms and scales: from pheromone trails to ancient travel routes to our modern knowledge networks, all the while demonstrating what trails can reveal about the world and our place in it. **LP**

DANIEL GLENN – STEWARDING RELATIONSHIPS

BLAKE CREAMER



2

DAN GLENN HAS been one of the most enduring forces in Atlantic Canadian landscape architecture for decades. His work is pragmatic and grounded – always arrived at through genuine listening and the kind of long-term commitment most project timelines don't allow for. I was lucky enough to work alongside him at the beginning of my career, and what he passed on to me well surpasses a "moment." It shaped my understanding of how lasting our profession's impact can be.

For nearly 20 years, Dan has worked on the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre in Nova Scotia. The project has weathered personnel changes and evolving budgets, and during my time on it, a windstorm reshaped the very bluff where we were designing a healing trail. We took stock, adjusted and carried on. What struck me wasn't Dan's problem-solving or technical fluency. It was how his staying power meant the project could absorb disruption without losing its footing.

Glenn Group's work along Harbour Passage in Saint John tells a similar story at a different scale. It's the waterfront trail I grew up with, and I still remember its opening as a moment of genuine community celebration. The trail carries the name Dan proposed, resonant with the city's history and the iconic cranberry red he chose is now woven into Saint John's identity. In 2024, decades on from its conception, the civic starting point he had long envisioned arrived with the opening of Ihtoli-maqahamok – The Gathering Space. Many designers could have shaped this waterfront, but only Dan carried the history and continuity to bring it to life in a way the whole community could recognize as its own.

These are just two of the hundreds of projects Dan has committed to throughout his career. He taught me that at the heart of each is the stewarding of relationships – a practice as foundational to our profession as the stewarding of land. The best landscapes are built by many hands, over more time than any single contract allows. What makes them extraordinary is the patient, respectful tending of the human connections that allow a vision to survive long enough to become real.

Dan brought that same patience to mentorship – teaching through demonstration. He gave me room and trusted me to do the work I believed I could. He was present when I needed guidance and quiet when I didn't, which is its own form of generosity. Watching him work, I learned that expertise in our profession is built not through authorship, but through accumulated attentiveness: to land, to people's history and knowledge, and to the slow work of earning trust among the communities we serve. That is a lesson worth carrying, and I have been fortunate to learn it from him. **LP**



1

1 WAGMATCOOK FIRST NATION, 2025
2 MI'KMAWEY DEBERT CULTURAL CENTRE HEALING TRAIL LAYOUT, 2024
PHOTOS BLAKE CREAMER

Refresh. Revitalize. Rely on Most Dependable Fountains.

Dependable hydration solutions that go beyond drinking.











MOST DEPENDABLE FOUNTAINS, INC.™

Crozier Enterprises, Ltd. Landmark by Crozier
866-624-9722
Sales@crozier.ca

Tessier Recreo Parc (Quebec)
800-838-8591
recreo-parc@tessier-rp.com

mostdependable.com

Jambette: A trusted partner in shaping distinctive landscapes across Canada!

We collaborate with landscape architects to bring bold, enduring outdoor spaces to life.

Over 40 years of expertise!

- Design-led, collaborative approach
- Innovation design. Proven quality
- Custom solutions tailored to each project
- Materials selected for durability and environmental performance
- IPEMA certified and CSA compliant
- Designed and manufactured in Canada



Hespeler Optimist Park, Cambridge, Ontario
A signature project by Openspace Solutions

Jambette Playground Equipment
700, rue des Calfats,
Lévis (Québec) Canada G6Y 9E6
Toll-free: 1-877-363-2687

Jambette
MADE IN CANADA

WHERE SHADE BECOMES A DESTINATION

Custom designs. Engineered solutions. Endless possibilities.

CUSTOM SHADE STRUCTURES
Engineered for durability and everyday performance.

ENGINEERED SOLUTIONS
Tailored to your space and built to last.

PAVILIONS & GATHERING SPACES
Designed to bring people together, in every season.





ICON Shelter Systems Inc

SHADE THAT PERFORMS. DESIGN THAT INSPIRES.

From concept to completion, ICON delivers shade solutions that elevate spaces and stand the test of time.

ICONSHELTERS.COM | 800-748-0985 | @icon_shelters



WE'VE MADE YOUR TREES OUR BUSINESS.

EXPERT TREE CARE FOR 119 YEARS — AND GROWING.

Quercus alba. *Betula papyrifera*. *Carya ovata*. Better known as White Oak, Paper Birch, and Shagbark Hickory, these are three of the thousands of species we specialize in. For 119 years, our family-owned company has brought a rare mix of groundbreaking science, award-winning safety practices, and global resources to every tree and shrub care task at hand. And at the heart of our success are our people — experts who know and champion every tree, no matter the species. Discover how our passion is inspiring one beautiful property after another.

Call **877-227-8538** or visit **bartlett.com**

PRUNING | FERTILIZATION | CABLING & BRACING
INSECT & DISEASE MANAGEMENT | TREE INSPECTIONS
STORM DAMAGE | LIGHTNING PROTECTION | REMOVALS

BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

SCIENTIFIC TREE CARE SINCE 1907

The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company

Equiparc
SINCE 1982

PROMENADE COLLECTION









DESIGN DURABILITY EXPERTISE

100 % Made in Canada.

1 800 363-9264 | EQUIPARC.COM





CANAAN
site furnishings

Tel. 1-905-305-6638
T.F. 1-877-305-6638

info@canaansf.com

canaansitefurnishings.com

140 Bentley Street, Unit 3,
Markham ON, L3R 3L2



520 COLLECTION

Made to fit your space, the 520 collection curved benches can be customized to whichever length and radius your space requires. Additional pieces in the collection include standard benches, connected straight benches, angle connector benches, curved and straight wall mount benches, seat islands, and tables. A solid steel frame supports seating surfaces made of Thermally Modified Red Oak, Ipe, or Recycled Plastic(HDPE).

DUMOR.COM | 800-598-4018

Beaver Valley Stone LIMITED
FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1989



A WIDE SELECTION OF
NATURAL STONE
AND PRECAST CONCRETE PRODUCTS

- Flagstone
- Interlocking
- Aggregates
- Accessories
- Natural & Concrete Stone Veneers
- Masonry products
- In-Lite LED Lights
- Retaining walls
- Bulk/bag road Salt

www.beavervalleystone.com
t: 905-886-5787 or t: 416-222-2424

Main Office & Yard:
8081 Woodbine Ave. SE Corner Woodbine/407
Office & Yard:
125 Langstaff Rd E., SE Corner Yonge/Hwy 7-407
Nursery & Garden Centre & Stone Yard:
402 Queensville Sd. Rd., Holland Landing
Milliken Yard:
4266 Steeles Ave., E., N/W Corner of Kennedy Rd.
Manufacturing Plant: 12350 Keele St., Maple

We Deliver! | @BVSLimited | beavervalleystone

RESHAPING THE IDEA OF
LANDSCAPE DESIGN



COMMERCIAL | RESIDENTIAL | PAVING

From the smooth lines of extruded pavers to molded pavers' distinctive characteristics, our brick's geometric perfection is a simple yet powerful asset to your paving design!

Visit our website for a wide range of clay pavers.

BELDEN
THE BELDEN BRICK COMPANY
beldenbrick.com | 330-456-0031

THOMAS STEELE
by Graber Manufacturing
thomas-steele.com | 800.448.7931



iZone Imaging
CHPL SIGN SOLUTIONS



888.464.9663
izoneimaging.com



MAGLIN®

More room to linger.
More reasons to stay.

720 Series | maglin.com

EVA LOUNGE

We're bringing a new kind of comfort to the outdoors.

Un nouveau type de confort pour la vie en plein air.



VICTOR STANLEY MC
VICTORSTANLEY.COM

ACCESS COVERS/COUVERCLES D'ACCÈS
Wundercovers 77
https://www.wundercovers.com

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNAGE/SIGNALISATION ARCHITECTURALE
Shadeview Structures 9
https://www.shadeview.com

ARCHITECTURAL WATER FOUNTAINS/
LES FONTAINES ARCHITECTURALES D'EAU
Most Dependable Fountains, Inc. 71
https://www.mostdependable.com

DECKS & RAILINGS/TERRASSES BALUSTRADES
Kayu Canada Inc. 74
https://www.kayu.ca

DECORATIVE CONCRETE/BÉTON DÉCORATIF
HUB Surface Systems 23
hubss.com/

INTERLOCKING PAVERS/PAVÉS AUTOBLOQUANTS
Unilock Limited 8
https://www.unilock.com

LANDSCAPE PRODUCTS/PRODUITS PAYSAGERS
Porcea Stone 22
https://romexhardscapes.com

ROMEX Hardscapes 22
https://romexhardscapes.com

LIGHTING/ÉCLAIRAGE
Streetlife Design & Products BV 4
www.streetlife.com

PAVER PRODUCTS/EQUIPMENT/PRODUITS/
MATÉRIEL POUR PAVÉS
The Belden Brick Company 64, 76
https://www.beldenbrick.com

PAVER-GRATE/PAVERS-GRILLES
IRONSMITH 12
https://ironsmith.cc

PAVING STONES/RETAINING WALLS/PAVÉS/
MURS DE SOUTÈNEMENT
Beaver Valley Stone Ltd. 76
https://www.beavervalleystone.com

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT/MATÉRIEL POUR TERRAINS DE JEUX
Landscape Structures Inc. 5
https://www.playlsi.com

PLAYGROUND SUPPLIERS/FOURNISSEURS DE TERRAIN DE JEU
ICON Shelters Systems 72
https://www.iconshelters.com

RECREATION PLAY SYSTEMS/COMPLEXES LUDIQUES
Jambette Playground Equipment Inc. 72
https://jambette.com/accueil

SIGNAGE/SIGNAGE
iZone Imaging 76
https://izoneimaging.com

SITE FURNISHINGS/MOBILIERS EXTÉRIEUR
Canaan Site Furnishings 75
https://canaansitefurnishings.com

DuMor Inc. 75
https://www.dumor.com

Equiparc 74
https://www.equiparc.com

Graber Manufacturing, Inc 65, 76
https://www.thomas-steele.com

Green Theory Design 17
www.greentheorydesign.com

Hauser Industries Inc. 13
www.hausersite.com

Landscape Forms Inc. 3
https://www.landscapeforms.com

Maglin Site Furniture Inc. . . . . . 24, 76, Outside Back Cover
https://www.maglin.com

Vestre 16
https://vestre.com/us

Victor Stanley Inc. . . . . . 76, Inside Front Cover
https://www.victorstanley.com

Wishbone Site Furnishings . . . . . Inside Back Cover
https://www.wishboneltd.com

TREE CARE/ENTRETIEN DES ARBRES
Bartlett Tree Experts 73
https://www.bartlett.com

TREE GRATES/GRILLES D'ARBRES
IRONSMITH 12
https://ironsmith.cc

TREE SURROUNDS
Blends surround into hardscapes and landscapes



WunderCovers™
(775) 400-2883
www.WunderCovers.com



THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AS TRAIL CONDUCTOR

KRISTINA PATTERSON

THERE IS A moment on a well-designed trail when you stop without quite knowing why – perhaps to take in a view or to catch your breath on a natural bench or rock. Likewise, you forge ahead simply because the path ahead feels inviting in a way that makes you want to keep going. Those moments are not accidents; they are the result of intentional design; precisely the kind of outcome that landscape architects are trained to create.

As the profession finds itself increasingly at the intersection of outdoor recreation planning, infrastructure development and ecological stewardship, the case for landscape architects leading trails projects has never been more compelling. Not because we do everything ourselves, but because we ask the right questions and we know who to bring in to answer the ones we can't answer.

Asking the Right Questions

Trail-specific practitioners are typically excellent at answering questions about gradient, surface material and technical difficulty. Engineers are well-equipped to manage drainage, cross-section profiles and load calculations.

Landscape architects begin somewhere different: Who are the users? What is the trail actually connecting – not just in physical space, but in experience? Is this trail needed at all, or is there a better way to meet the community's goal? What does this landscape want to be, and what will this trail ask of it?

Questions such as these are foundational to our discipline, and they shape everything that follows. A trail is not just infrastructure. It is a curated sequence of experiences moving through a living landscape; designing it well requires understanding the whole picture before drawing a single line or picking up a spade.

Seeing the Whole Landscape

One of the most persistent tensions in trails work is the gap between the line on the plan and the experience on the ground. Civil engineers bring indispensable technical rigour – stormwater management, structural profiles, precise grades – but the subtlety of the meandering line, the way a trail gathers momentum before a descent or slows and widens to invite pause at a viewshed, is a different kind of awareness. It lives in the intersection of ecology, human perception, cultural meaning and spatial sequence.

This is the landscape architect's territory. And we have words for it – *genius loci,* the spirit of place. And while that sometimes sounds abstract, its absence is immediately felt. It is felt by every person who has walked a trail that simply doesn't flow, the route that cuts too directly, the viewpoint that faces the wrong direction or the platform design that actually detracts from the surrounding landscape. Even the rest area that sits in a hollow with no reason to linger. These are design failures, even when the engineering is technically sound.

Landscape architects are trained to read a site and translate what they find into design decisions that serve both the user and the landscape. We think in terms of arrival, progression, threshold and destination. We consider how the trail connects to the built elements around it – trailhead buildings, viewing platforms, signage, food caches and the like – as part of a coherent whole rather than a collection of separate deliverables.

The trail is never just the trail. **LP**



Kristina Patterson, *BA, BLA, MTA, MBCSLA, OALA, RPP, MCIP, WEDG Assoc., is a Whistler, BC-based, award-winning landscape architect and registered planner with 26 years of experience in landscape architecture, planning, urban design, parks and trails design. A creative and collaborative design lead with McElhanney, a multi-disciplinary company in western Canada, Kristina applies a mix of skill sets from landscape architecture and planning, working with many allied professionals on a wide variety of trails-related projects that include transportation, urban design, park design, design guidelines and land development.*



Designed for Generations.

A gardening lesson bridges four generations, made possible by the Wishbone Rutherford Accessible Planter. We engineer durable site furnishings for everyone, built to last for generations.

Wishbone
site furnishings

sales@wishboneLtd.com | (866) 626-0476



MAGLIN®

Connection starts with a place to gather.
The rest happens naturally.

Ogden Harvest Table | maglin.com