



Marathon Shuffle marks 24 years



This year's Marathon Shuffle promises to be the largest and most fun ever. The number of participants registered for the annual rite of spring remains on track to break a record and the waiting list continues to grow.

"Every year this event gets more and more popular," said Emma Larocque, a member of the organizing committee who is coordinating registration. "It's a reflection of how well-known and loved the Sunshine Coast Trail has become in Powell River, and around the province as well."

The 24th Annual Marathon Shuffle takes place on Sunday, April 30. The route traverses Tla'amin Nation land, part of the treaty agreement that became effective in 2016.

Participants in the full 29-kilometre Shuffle travel the SCT from Malaspina Road to the Shinglemill. Those who prefer the Half Shuffle go from Wilde Road to the Shinglemill.

Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society (PAWS) members started the Shuffle in 1993, as a way to showcase the wonders of the SCT. While most choose to hike, trail runners also participate, with some eyeing Graham Cocksedge's 2016 record time for the full Shuffle of two hours 13 minutes. Female runners hope to better the record set by Nicola Gildersleeve in 2015 of two hours 52 minutes.

The event attracts runners and hikers from across the province, and further afield as well. Last year, a record number of 300 people participated, with half of those travelling to Powell River from out of town.

This year, we reached the new cap of at 450 participants in 4 days, and have a wait list of 250. Organizers are highlighting the fact that the event takes place, rain or shine. "We are reminding people that if they register,

to please attend," said Eagle Walz, PAWS president. "If they can't make it, we're asking that they let us know."

Many people who register early drop off the list as the months pass, so those on the waiting list still have a chance to participate. Because of the interest in the event, and the cap, Larocque stresses the importance of people cancelling if it turns out they can't participate. Their spots will then be opened up for those on the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis.

The event helps to boost Powell River's economy by attracting out-of-town participants, Eagle explained. "When people register, then change their minds at the last minute, they are likely keeping visitors to our community from experiencing the Sunshine Coast Trail." People who want to cancel their registration should email sunshinecoasttrailbc@gmail.com.

While the event is free, donations to PAWS are encouraged and most welcome. All donations go towards trail maintenance and development, with all the work done by volunteers.

With a record number of participants, more volunteers than ever are needed. Emily Walz is managing the large number of volunteers who make the event successful year after year. Emily matches people with the tasks they most enjoy and also arranges for an orientation meeting. People interested in volunteering can email shufflevolunteer@gmail.com.

For more information visit:
www.sunshinecoasttrail.com/events.html.



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Trails Plan

Over the last year the Powell River Regional District (PRRD) has been engaged in creating a Regional Trails Plan. The long and the short of it was that the Regional Trails Plan Working Group created a Draft Regional Trails Plan that was not accepted by the board. The Chair then established a Chair's Standing Committee that in essence was tasked to come up with recommendations that would help make the Draft Regional Trails Plan acceptable to the board.

During that time PR PAWS and PRCA (Powell River Cycling Association) representatives met a handful of times to establish usage boundaries around the SCT that would be agreeable to both groups. PAWS reiterated that while our mandate is to promote the majority of the SCT as a hiking trail, we are in support of some multi-use sections of the Sunshine Coast Trail that could be used by mountain bikers and other user groups such as ATV and horseback riders on some old road/trails in the Smith Range and Tin Hat area. This provides access to some SCT huts and connections to the Duck Lake area and town, as agreed to on a map. The veteran PRCA representative stated that he has no interest in the SCT, but that there is strong interest in establishing an iconic destination gravity mountain biking trail in the southern end of the Mount Mahony area connecting to Duck Lake and Powell River, something that PAWS agrees to support.

A Regional Trails Plan can help the area's various outdoor recreation user groups and provide a more effective level of operation, legal status, and protection with the potential to create other first-class recreation/tourism destination infrastructure in our region. This is something that PAWS has worked for and enjoyed for a good many years. PAWS backs the aspirations and work of the other user groups in the vast and varied backcountry that surrounds us. Powell River is rapidly becoming a multi-faceted recreation/tourism destination that is attracting positive attention.

Consultations between members of the Chair's Standing Committee with members of the Outdoor Recreation Users Group (ORUG) and members of PAWS and PRCA interests, resulted in the following three

major recommendations being supported, provided they would be funded in the new budget, and provided that the PRRD Regional Trails Network Standing Committee included PAWS representation and that of other listed user groups and organizations moving forward:

1. Establish a Powell River Regional District Regional Trails Network Standing Committee to coordinate all trail-related initiatives.
2. Recruit and retain a Regional Parks and Trails Coordinator to work with all levels of government and volunteer trail user groups.
3. Secure liability insurance to indemnify trail volunteers.

These recommendations were recently passed by the Board and provided with a \$45,000 budget. It will be the work of that PRRD Trails Network Standing Committee and the coordinator to make recommendations to the board that will hopefully result in the well-being of the region's population, environment and a thriving recreation/tourism industry that will diversify and establish a vigorous local economy. We look forward to continued talks in this ongoing process. 🐾

#InstagramUs

Are you on instagram? Show Us Your Shuffle! We'd love to see images from your special shuffle day - you can share them with us and other SCT followers by using the following hashtags: **#shuffle2017** **#marathonshuffle** and **#shareyourshuffle**. Hope to see you there! 🐾



24 reasons

to do the Marathon Shuffle

The 24th annual Marathon Shuffle will happen on Sunday, April 30th this year. We have compiled a list of 24 of our favourite reasons this event is a MUST!

1. To experience the excitement and anticipation of the start line!
2. Because it's spring.
3. Because you KNOW you have to beat that killer hill at the beginning of the Thunder Ridge section.
4. To check out all the hard work the PAWS crew has been doing to "shuffle-ize" the trail.
5. Because you can!
6. It's a REALLY good way to stretch your legs.
7. Because spring is one of the best times to amble along that gorgeous moss-covered stretch of Toquenatch Trail.
8. The snacks, of course.
9. To stop and say hi to the BIG FIR at the south end of Toquenatch Trail.
10. Because you haven't done Marathon Hill since last year.
11. To record your personal best time!
12. To introduce the SCT to someone new.
13. To hear the frogs singing as you zoom by Rieveley's Pond.
14. Because you love climbing up and down, and up and down, and up...
15. That vista at the top of Big Sliammon Lake...ooh! ahh!
16. You're a glutton for punishment.
17. To pay a visit to Shangri-La.



18. Because how can you not take advantage of this event on one of the most beautiful trails in Canada?!
19. No pain, no gain, as they say...
20. The snacks! (yes, it's worth repeating)
21. Because THIS year you'll be ready for Scout Mountain.
22. Bragging rights – no matter how long it takes you!
23. Because being exhausted from a day of hard hiking/running is one of the best feelings in the world.
24. Because there's a beer waiting for you at the end!

Happy shuffling! 🐾

Important reminder for Shufflers

- All registration will take place at the Shinglemill. There will be no registration available at Malaspina Road, the start of the Full Shuffle, or Tomkinson Road, the start of the Half Shuffle. Buses will be available at the Shinglemill to transport participants to the start of the Full and Half Shuffle.
- No dogs are allowed in the Shuffle. Please leave your pooches at home.
- There is a cut-off time of 4 pm at Sutherland Street. Any participants who arrive after 4 pm at the aid station will be transported to the Shinglemill.



President's Message

This year we had an early start with preparing the 29-km-long Marathon Shuffle route from Malaspina Road to the Shinglemill for the annual Shuffle and had brushed, bucked and cleared quite a few kilometres by the end of January, even replaced marginal or missing planks on the boardwalks of the Tokenach Trail. We even had shuffelized some new sections. And then it snowed heavily for four days from February 3rd to 6th and branches upon branches and trees upon trees became overloaded with wet snow that stuck to them like glue, and froze. And then the winds howled and snapped the branches and trunks as if they were balsa sticks. Trees were topped half way up, or ripped out by their massive roots, everywhere in the forest and on the trail, there were tangles that obscured the path, but here a fallen marker and there one still stuck to a standing tree. How to get there? How to get beyond the tangle when off to the sides it appeared just as bad?



Clearing from Bliss portage to the Knob after the winter storms.

The outfall of Snowmageddon can be severe in stretches. But now a third of it is cleared, and more will be in the coming weeks and months. It's a tough challenge in places. We ran into a group of four young men who had not done research prior to leaving on their hike (Please check the SCT Facebook page, talk to the folks at the Powell River Visitor Infocentre at [1]-604-485-4701), and so they were surprised to learn firsthand about what kind of tangle there was in the jungle. When they disembarked at Sarah Point they quickly found out. It took them eight hours to hike eight kilometres, traveling at about a third of normal speed, and much more exhausting. They walked out on Bliss Portage looking for a taxi. It can get very tiring out there, especially if you throw in a few feet of snow into the mix – and no snow shoes in the mountains. Please inform yourself by contacting the SCT Facebook page, or the Infocentre where you want to have your adventure. Be prepared, let someone know where you are going and when you will be back, and stick to the plan. Be safe and have a great trip.

PAWS and various other volunteers will continue to clear the SCT, now in lowland and snow free areas under 400-500 metres in elevation until the snow melts and reveals all the broken branches and trees. We will keep going through the months ahead, and if you feel like it pick up some sticks and toss them off the unbeaten path. Thanks.

Happy Trails! —Eagle Walz



For trail updates, find us on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/SunshineCoastTrail



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