

Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail opens in Lanark County

A ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday afternoon marked the official opening of the 61-kilometre Lanark County portion of the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail.

Local councillors, staff, special guests and members of the public were on hand for the celebration under the overpass at Highway 7 on the border between Carleton Place and Beckwith Township.

“This ceremony marks the culmination of eight years of effort between municipalities and many partners to develop this multi-use trail,” said Lanark County Warden John Fenik (Perth Mayor). “The OVRT gives many user groups the opportunity to explore communities and landscapes throughout Lanark County and beyond, bringing new life and enjoyment to this abandoned rail corridor.”

Lanark County, Renfrew County and the Township of Papineau-Cameron formed a partnership in 2011 to acquire ownership of the 296-kilometre abandoned Canadian Pacific Rail between Smiths Falls and Mattawa. The county’s portion runs from Sturgess Road in Montague Township to the Renfrew/Ottawa border.

Over the past year, Lanark County undertook intensive work to prepare the trail for use, including granular surfacing and installing of gates and signage. Trail users will soon find signage on gates that outline trail rules. Signs have been installed along the route to identify streets and roads. Work on three bridges in Almonte is expected to be completed in November.

The trail’s hours of operation are from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. April 1 through Nov. 30, and 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Dec. 1 to March 31. Non-motorized users have the right-of-way at all times. Trail users are asked to obey all signage, stay on the trail and respect private property and other trail users. Litter should be removed by users. Dogs are to be kept on a leash, and users are asked to clean up after pets and horses (stoop and scoop). Fires, hunting and camping are not permitted. Motorized users will require a licence and insurance, as well as a club permit (e.g. Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs or Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs). Information about acquiring permits will be posted soon on the website for the trail at www.ottawavalleytrail.com.

“This once-prosperous rail line has been turned into a well-maintained and managed trail that will benefit our communities in terms of quality of life, tourism, economic development and physical fitness,” said Councillor Richard Kidd (Beckwith Reeve), who is chair of the county’s economic development committee. “This is an exciting day for Lanark County.”

For a complete list of rules and additional information about the trail, please visit www.ottawavalleytrail.com. For questions or to report issues on the trail, e-mail trails@lanarkcounty.ca.

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Photos available at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/u4n9fm8ruvo8918/AAC67-Sj1SqQnjPMp4EuhVhWa?dl=0>

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