

The fallacy of the Trans Canada Trail (formerly The Great Trail /Trans Canada Trail)

Why Canada Can't have a National Cycling Route Network

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Document created: June 20, 2021

First Published: June 23, 2021

Updated: October 14, 2023

The Trans Canada Trail (TCT), formerly known as The Great Trail, formerly known as the Trans Canada Trail is an insult to all recreations. An insult to Canadians coast to coast to coast. A random assortment of 'trails' with no consistent usage is not something that should be bragged about. It's a National embarrassment.

Now, before you start frothing at the mouth ready for your keyboard warrior flamewar reply, you need to understand some context (if you don't already agree with the assertion).

PLEASE UNDERSTAND: Each segment on its own, when examined separately by itself is wonderful on its own merits - and doesn't need anything extra for its promotion. Each segment is already a local or regional created, managed and maintained trail with its own usage designation.

The criticism of the Trans Canada Trail is for its entirety - not the individual segments. What's wrong is that it shouldn't be physically signed and designated as something to navigate and be connected.

It's funded by a national organization which operates as a Bank. The bank's logo only needs to be present on the bottom corner of maps - which feature local/regional trails, a designated map for each recreation.

The part that is misleading is because of physical signage, anyone who sees the signs on the ground, takes the big assumption that the adjoining segments are of the same quality and designed for the same users from one segment to the next. And therefore, on the ground, it appears to be an

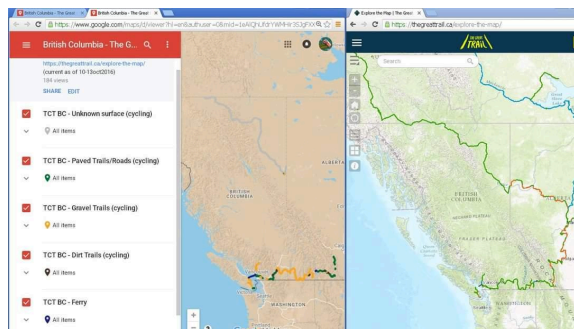
incomplete 'National Cycling Route' even though the National organization has no intention or interest in becoming a National Cycling Route Network.

Here it is.... Reality vs. Expectation

[BC Google Map](#)

<https://thegreattrail.ca/explore-the-map/>

The example shows just the BC segment, but the rest of the country is the same - fragmented bits of random 'trails'.



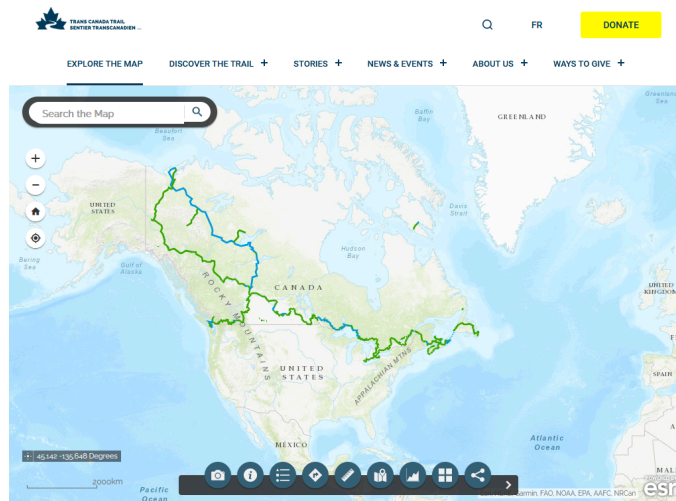
I've sorted/filtered The TCT data down to 12 Google Maps with just the cycling segments, and showing layers for each surface type (Unknown Surface, Paved Trail/Road, Gravel Trail/Road, Dirt trail/road, and Ferry crossing). I've also colour coded them so i hope it's easy to understand.

([BC](#), [Yukon](#), [Northwest Territories](#), [Alberta](#), [Saskatchewan](#), [Manitoba](#), [Ontario](#), [Quebec](#), [New Brunswick](#), [PEI](#), [Nova Scotia](#) and [Newfoundland](#))

The full GPX file (which i'm still working on) is available [here](#))

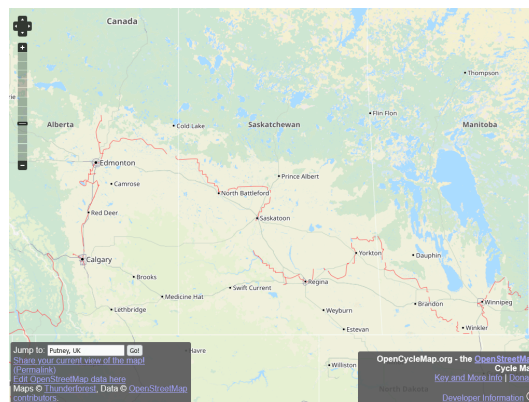
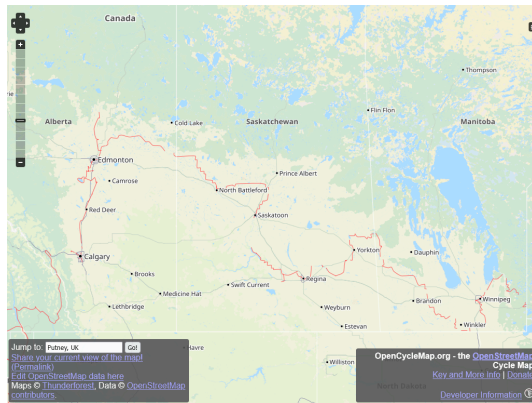
It's wrong and a national embarrassment to try and navigate it, as it's not designed for that. It's just meant to be admired from a (great) distance.

Showing a connected green line and blue lines, the Map is TOTALLY misleading. It's an insult to all



recreations.

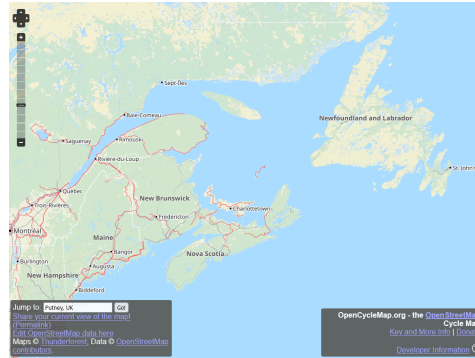
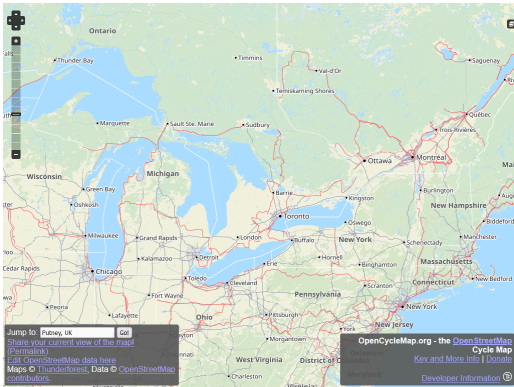
Here's some screenshots of the OpenStreetMap OpenCyclemap layer



Over BC and Alberta
Alberta,

Saskatchewan and Manitoba

Ontario and Quebec



<https://www.opencyclemap.org/?zoom=6&lat=44.32306&lon=-80.29238&layers=B0000>

Quebec, New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Citizen cartographers of OpenStreetMap (screenshots above) are misled to believe that the Trans Canada Trail is in fact a national cycling route network. That's because the way the map is built is based on Facts on the Ground. Facts on the ground means simply looking at physical signage to determine what exists. The facts on the ground clearly indicate that, while it isn't a connected finished route, segments of it are clearly that of a national cycling route. The fact that the Trans Canada Trail Foundation has no intention or interest in ever making it a connected national cycling route network doesn't matter. Facts on the ground show that it's a national cycling route. Despite what the Trans Canada Trail says on twitter or on their website.

I think it should be named 'The Great Schrödinger's Trail'
As it is both NOT and IS a National Cycling Route Network.

Over Ontario. While there are some segments that are cycling - it's a regional cycling route not a national route. And it shows many segments that are clearly for ATVs (west of Barrie, ON toward Ottawa is an ATV track following the Abandoned Railway lines. Unlike in the USA, when the rail lines were abandoned, there was no organization which kept them or converted them to trails. It's just random segments for random users.

<https://www.opencyclemap.org/?zoom=6&lat=50.79135&lon=-120.72207&layers=B0000>

For completeness, the route on Vancouver Island and the mainland is NOT a national cycling route

<https://www.opencyclemap.org/?zoom=6&lat=47.15909&lon=-62.38467&layers=B0000>

Fortunately, someone had the common sense to remove the T'Railway over Newfoundland as it's definitely NOT for road cycling. Only for hard-core ATVs.

<https://www.opencyclemap.org/?zoom=6&lat=52.40175&lon=-105.93447&layers=B0000>

And in western Canada, these routes are NOT a national cycling route - some are hiking only, others are ATVs and others are totally useless.



While this sign clearly describes The Great Trail as a National Cycling Route, as there is no other information provided to the casual observer, the sign says 'cyclists today' and 'cyclists this year'. The

map below it has yellow lines going across the country. With no legend indicating otherwise, it's clearly a Cycling Route. And it's physically on a dedicated Cycling lane.

...
Yet the tweet says otherwise,

<https://twitter.com/TheGreatTrail/status/1035188337919909891?s=19>



Trans Canada Trail 🇨🇦

@TCTrail

Replying to

@samvekemans

Hi Sam, we actually never said it was a national cycling network. Given its length, the Trail is a multi-use network. Cycling is possible - and enjoyable - on a number of Trail sections across Canada, including the KVR. We hope this helps.

8:31 AM · Aug 30, 2018

And the website says otherwise also.

<https://thegreattrail.ca/stories/7-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-great-trail/>

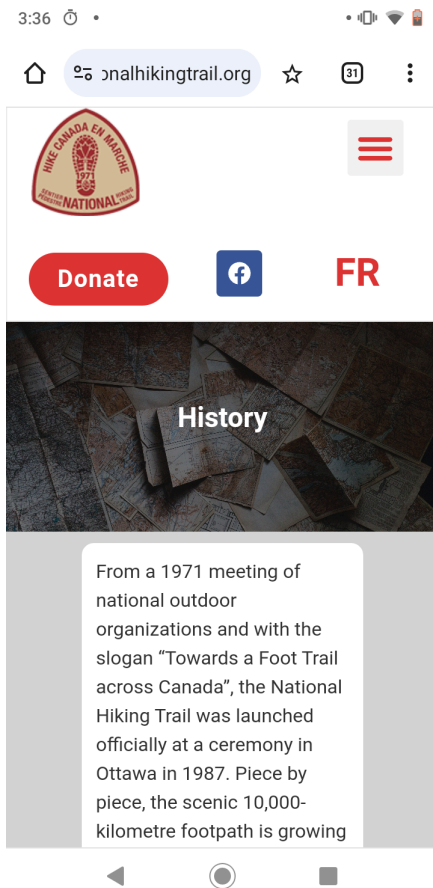
Therefore it's both NOT a National Cycling Route Network and it is - at the same time.

Even though I've created the Bike Across Canada Route Network, the Great Trail still gets recognized as the National Cycling Route Network so it gets in the way.



They aren't a national walking trail, nor a national bikepacking route, nor a national canoe route. It's a Multi use Multi modal recreation trail covering Canada coast to coast to coast.

Hike Canada en Marche does still exist, with the focus on building a national footpath across Canada, but it will be a long time before that gets developed as the Trans Canada Trail gets in the way.

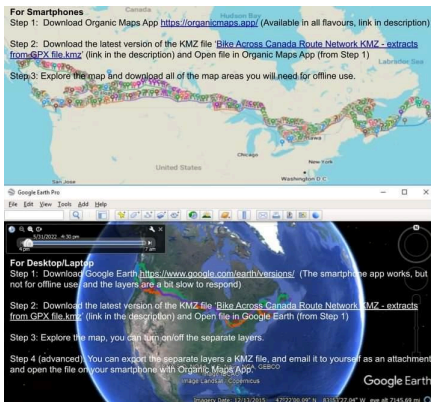


<https://www.nationalhikingtrail.org/history/>

Building the National Bikepacking route network (for dirt and gravel trail preference) is another goal of mine, and it's simply crazy that the Trans Canada Trail Foundation has zero interest in creating such a network.

Instead, they are content with promoting something which is a national embarrassment.

It's obvious that the developers of the Trans Canada Trail have never been to a country that has a national cycling route network in place, as it's just silly to have such a random user thing and call it 'great'.



Here's the simple step by step instructions for the viewing the Bike Across Canada Route Network KMZ file:

For Smartphones

Step 1: Download Organic Maps App <https://organicmaps.app/> (Available in all flavours, link in description)

Step 2: Download the latest version of the KMZ file 'Bike Across Canada Route Network KMZ - extracts from GPX file.kmz' (link in the description) and Open file in @Organic Maps App (from Step 1)

Step 3: Explore the map and download all of the map areas you will need for offline use.

<https://archive.org/download/BikeAcrossCanadaRouteNetworkGPSTracksPOIs/Bike%20Across%20Canada%20Route%20Network%20KMZ%20-%20extracts%20from%20GPX%20file.kmz>) and Open file in @Organic Maps App (from Step 1)

Step 3: Explore the map and download all of the map areas you will need for offline use.

For Desktop/Laptop

Step 1: Download Google Earth <https://www.google.com/earth/versions/> (The smartphone app works, but not for offline use, and the layers are a bit slow to respond)

Step 2: Download the latest version of the KMZ file 'Bike Across Canada Route Network KMZ - extracts from GPX file.kmz' (link in the description) and Open file in Google Earth (from Step 1)

Step 3: Explore the map, you can turn on/off the separate layers.

Step 4 (advanced): You can export the separate layers a KMZ file, and email it to yourself as an attachment, and open the file on your smartphone with Organic Maps App.

The Bike Across Canada Route Network, on the other hand, is something that can be defined as 'great'. Tooting my own horn, it's built based on examining hundreds of trip reports from self-supported cyclists going across Canada. And when you draw out the routes taken and overlay it on the same

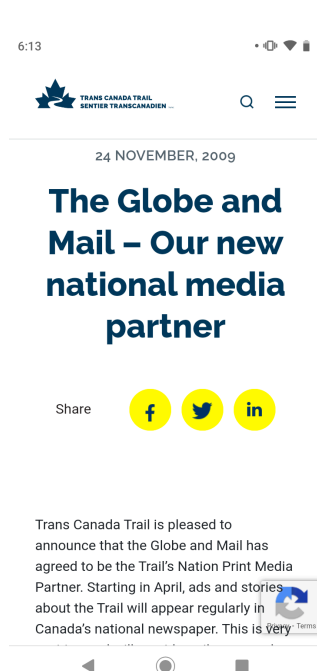
map, as well as lots of GPS tracks, we start to see the similarities between the routes that people have taken. I look at the existing cycling infrastructure and discuss it with the Facebook group (which is made up of those who have done the trip) and directly with people who have done the trip as well as local people who are familiar with the area.

The planned route gets changed when there is sufficient reason to change it. Sometimes it's a better route found, other times the physical infrastructure changes ie. Roads get repaved and better shoulders now exist.

Hopefully you can understand how the Trans Canada Trail Foundation gets in the way. They already have all of the pieces of the puzzle - they can create a National Cycling Route Network and fully fund and put up signs for it, but they choose not to. They have a lobbyist in Ottawa and provincial partners and corporate sponsors as well as private donors, everything needed to build the National Cycling Route Network. They can also build the National Walking Route, as well as the National Bikepacking route, and the National paddling route, and the National horseback riding route. But again, they choose not to.

They even have the Globe and Mail to promote the brand and have paid ads on YouTube for it.

<https://tctrail.ca/news/the-globe-and-mail-our-new-national-media-partner/>



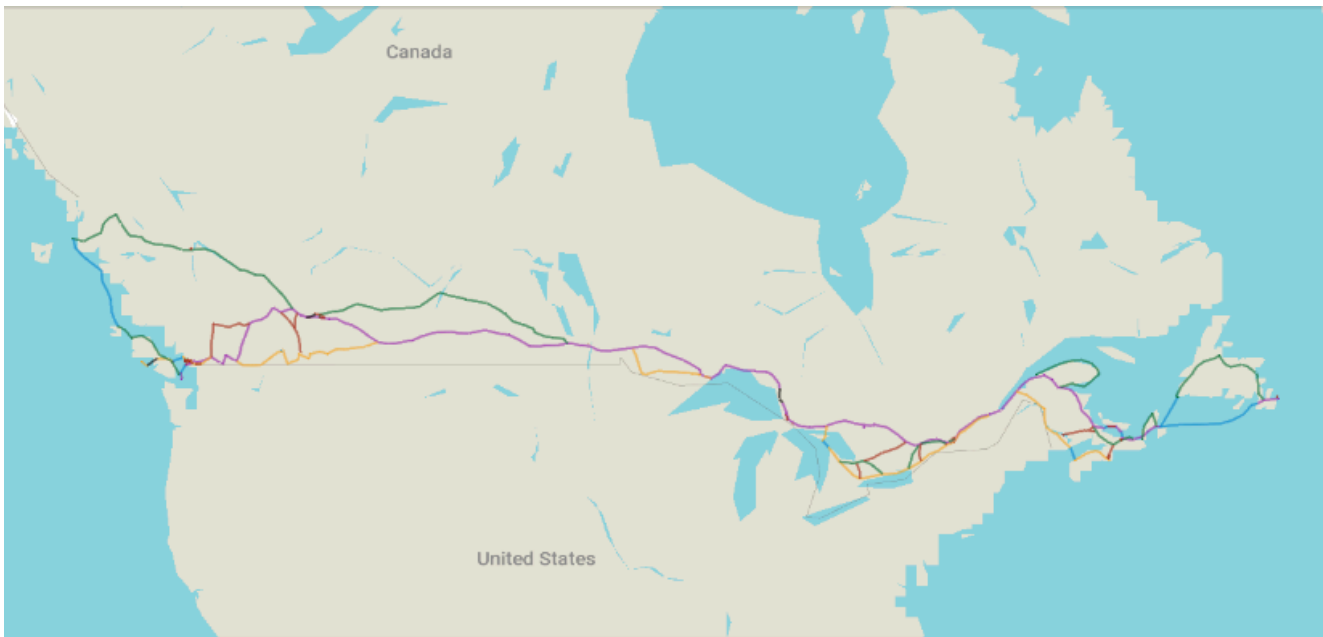
"Trans Canada Trail is pleased to announce that the Globe and Mail has agreed to be the Trail's Nation Print Media Partner. Starting in April, ads and stories about the Trail will appear regularly in Canada's national newspaper. This is very exciting and will provide trail users and supporters the latest information about Canada's national Trail.

Thanks to a major trail supporter!"

The truth is, if it was a designated user trail network with other overlapping routes and clearly defined user designations, they wouldn't need to spend any money on advertisements.

So here we are, I have the National Cycling Route Network proposed, called the Bike Across Canada Route Network, and can't get the recognition it deserves since (according to facts on the ground) Canada already has a national cycling route network which just isn't complete.

The current status (June 2021) is that I'm detailing every segment of it creating a connected West-East route as a GPX file (set of GPX files) or single file with a whole bunch of GPX tracks, showing the network and including the Accommodation Connector Route.



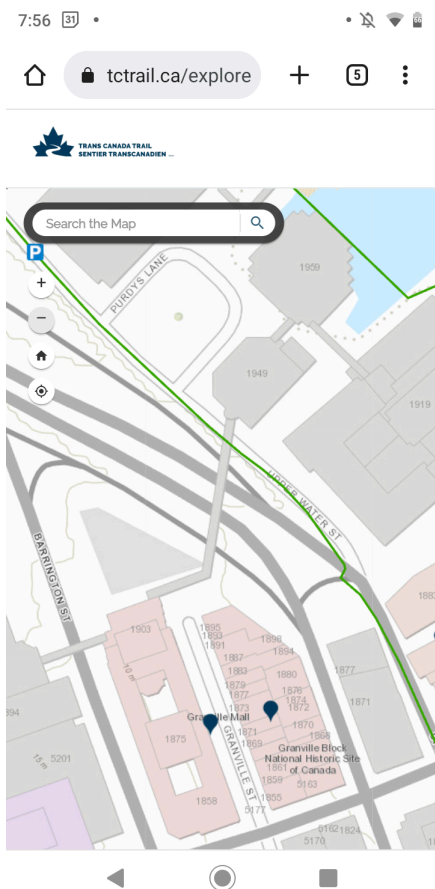
The [Bike Across Canada Route Network](#) - On the other hand, is actually useful. You can download the latest version of the network as a KMZ file

<https://archive.org/download/BikeAcrossCanadaRouteNetworkGPSTracksPOIs/Bike%20Across%20Canada%20Route%20Network%20KMZ%20-%20extracts%20from%20GPX%20file.kmz> and use the Organics Map Offline App to view it. <https://organicmaps.app/> (updated July 2022)

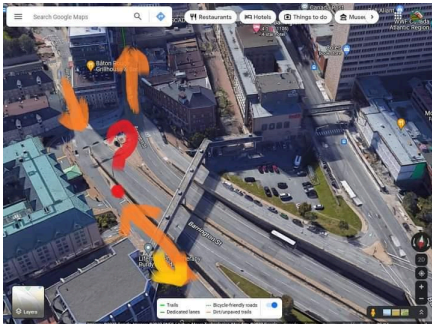
Addendum (added 14dec2022, needs further revisions) and this document is open for public comments.

When asking Vélo Canada Bikes if they are planning on building a National Cycling Route Network, the response was to try contacting the Trans Canada Trail....

Think for a moment as to why Velo Canada Bikes doesn't have a plan on making a national cycling route network.



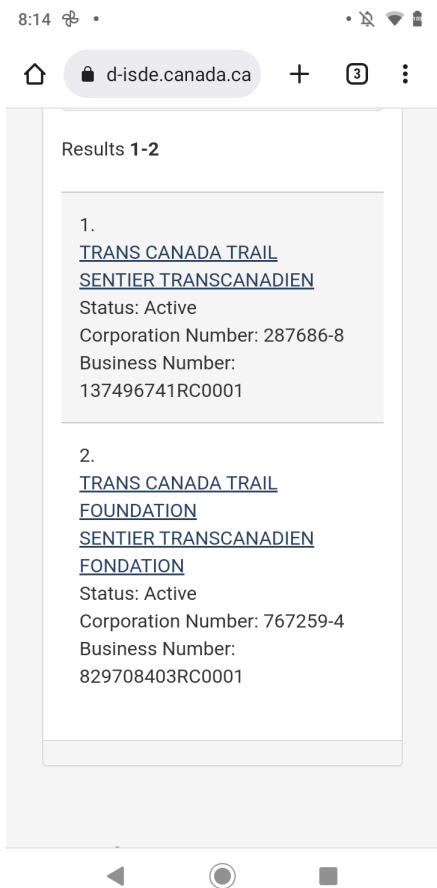
Upper Water Street in Halifax going southbound is actually a 1-way northbound street (at the jagged line on the map)



Google Street view looking southbound.
There is no access to downtown from Upper Water Street (bottom of image)

When asking who is in charge of the Trans Canada Trail, there are 2 corporations that embezzle funds. One is a bank, the other is a laundromat.
Note that they don't own nor operate nor have any say in how the funds for local 'active transportation' actually gets used.

https://ised-isde.canada.ca/cc/lqcy/fdrlCrpSrch.html?locale=en_CA (search for 'Trans Canada Trail' and 2 results are found)



<https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2022/08/government-of-canada-announces-three-projects-dedicated-to-expanding-active-transportation-infrastructure-in-the-lower-mainland.html>

National Active Transportation Strategy (political talk for lots of Sharrows)

How to waste billions in 1 simple step.

<https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2022/10/14/2534891/0/en/Trans-Canada-Trail-and-Destination-Canada-Form-New-Partnership.html>

Also, the Trans Canada Trail needs money.

If the TCT Foundation expanded their vision at least 50 fold, making a complete usable network for each type of recreation, I'd stop making fun of them. :)

The organization, both the Trans Canada Trail and the Trans Canada Trail, are de facto Crown Corporations. Unaccountable for the tax dollars received.

On Thu, Mar 5, 2020, 7:05 AM Jérémie Gabourg <JGabourg@tctrail.ca> wrote:
Mr Vekemans,

In response to your e-mail dated March 1, please note that our organization will continue to focus on executing our mission of promoting and assisting in the development of The Great Trail of Canada. We will continue to focus on raising the much needed funds to support our volunteers at the local level in the continued enhancement of this national network of multi-use recreational trails.

We have acknowledged your opinion, and we wish you the best with your personal project. However, we respectfully decline to get involved in any capacity at this time.

Regards,

Jérémie Gabourg

Vice President, Communications & Marketing

https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/app/secure/ocl/lrs/do/advSrch?V_SEARCH.command=refineCategory&V_TOKEN=1234567890&V_SEARCH.scopeCategory=solr.facetName.registrationTypeCategory%3D1

The screenshot displays the Lobby Canada website interface. At the top, there are two browser tabs for lobbycanada.gc.ca/app/. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Header:** Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada / Commissariat au lobbying du Canada.
- Navigation:** Registry of Lobbyists, Registry Dashboard, Advanced Registry Search.
- Search Results:** A section titled "Advanced Registry Search Results" with search criteria: "With all of the words: Trans Canada Trail". It includes buttons for "Start over" and "Modify criteria".
- Results:** A list of four search results for "Trans Canada Trail", each with a consultant name and registration dates. For example, the first result is by William Wuehr, Crestview Strategy, registered from 2022-10-14 to present.
- Summary:** A blue box at the top right indicates "Version 2 of 2 (2022-02-08 to 2022-09-16)".
- Details:** A sidebar on the right provides "Lobbying Information", "Subject Matters" (Arts and Culture, Environment, Infrastructure, Tourism), "Subject Matter Details" (Grant, Contribution or Other Financial Benefit), and "Communication Techniques" (Written communication).

https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/app/secure/ocl/lrs/do/advSrch?V_SEARCH.command=refineCategory&V_TOKEN=1234567890&V_SEARCH.scopeCategory=solr.facetName.documentType%3Dregistration

9:18



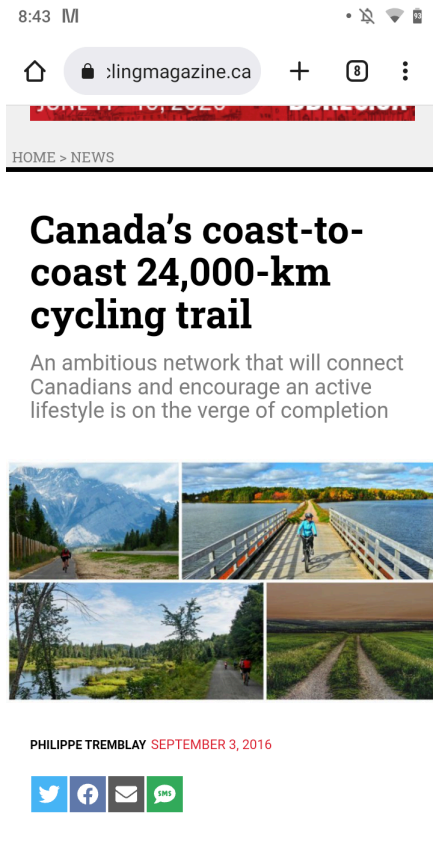
tctrail.ca/faq/



Well paid lobbyists.

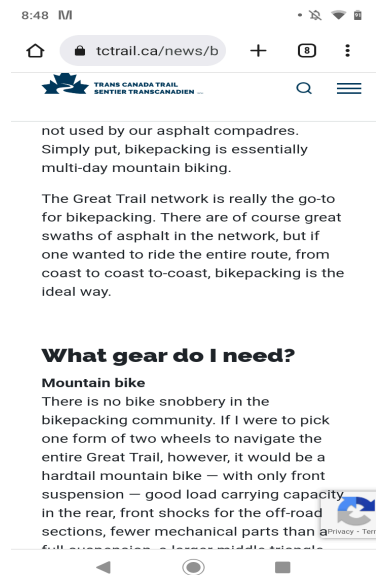
"Trans Canada Trail does not own or operate any trail."

<https://cyclingmagazine.ca/spotlight/canadas-coast-coast-22000-km-bike-path/>



Canada's coast-to-coast 24,000-km cycling trail
An ambitious network that will connect Canadians and encourage an active lifestyle is on the verge of completion

**



<https://tctrail.ca/news/bikepacking-101/>

Bikepacking Route? Totally misleading statements.

**

<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2020/09/19/it-s-over-27-000km-long-but-what-is-the-great-trail-of-canada>

Funds put to lobby against paving the shoulders is wrong.
Perhaps this article was sponsored.


8:52 MI

euronews.com/ti

euronews.travel

EXPERIENCES

It's over 27,000km long, but what is The Great Trail of Canada?



Part of The Great Trail by Second Hand Beach in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. - Copyright Kalen Emsley

By **Marthe de Ferrer** • 25/09/2020

It took over a quarter of a century to complete and is believed to be the biggest volunteer project ever undertaken in the country, but what exactly is **The Great Trail**

Any cyclists reading the article will openly laugh at the ludicrous notion of this.

<https://www.cantechletter.com/2016/09/canadas-new-24000-km-cross-country-bike-trail-draws-criticisms-users/#>

By **Dylan Waddell** | Published on September 4, 2016 | Last Updated on April 6, 2020 |
Filed under: **All posts, Science**

Trans Canada Trail, a 24,000 km cross-country bike trail, draws criticism



0 When it hits its completion date...
Shares: [Facebook icon] [Twitter icon]
which is ex

Some criticism makes it through the cracks.

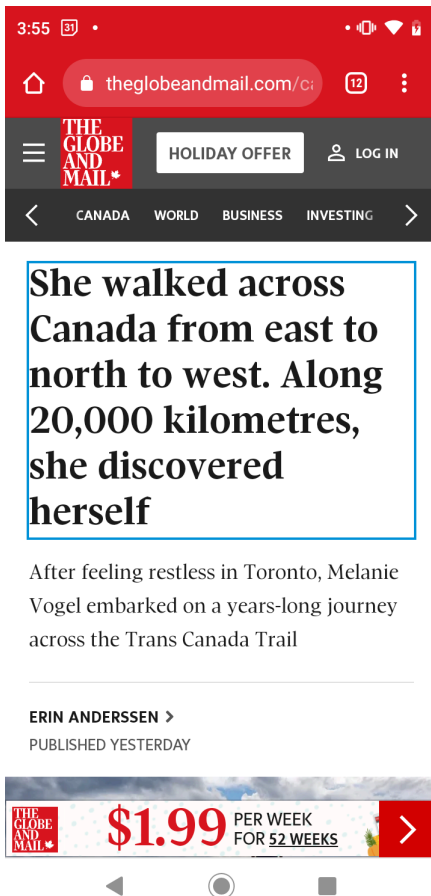
This is a sponsored MISLEADING article. The TCT is NOT a National Walking Trail. It's misleading because the headline states that she 'walked across Canada' and at the end it says 'Trans Canada Trail'

'She walked across Canada from east to north to west. Along 20,000 kilometres, she discovered herself

After feeling restless in Toronto, Melanie Vogel embarked on a years-long journey across the Trans Canada Trail'

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-walking-trans-canada-trail/>

You can tell that it's a sponsored post because The Globe and Mail has a paywall for articles. This

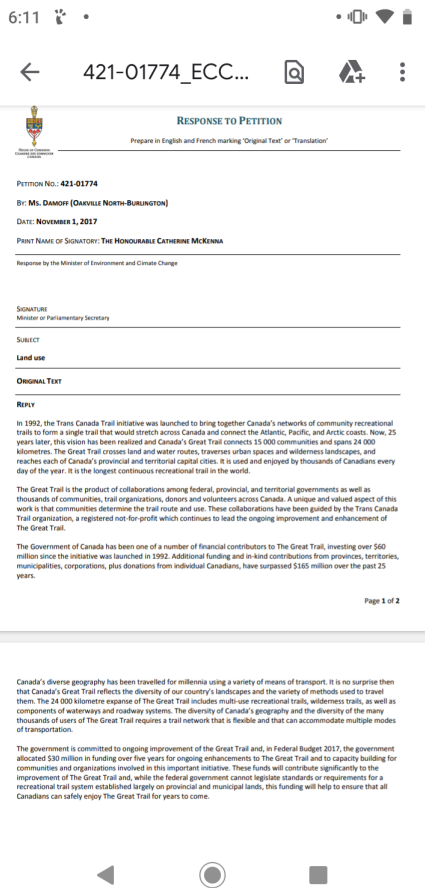


article doesn't have a paywall on it.

If it was an actual National Walking Trail then there would be no need to be spending money on promotions for it, because if it was properly signed and checked each year to see the trail/path/route conditions and signs were put up for the temporary detours where needed. The Trail would simply sell itself.

You don't see advertisements for the Bruce Trail in southern Ontario, as it's clear what it is, there is no question what activity it's for, walking/hiking. It's actually dumb to have it as 'multi-use' because that's simply a poor excuse for not making it useful for any one recreation.

The entire premise of the Trans Canada Trail is non-sense. Random users of random trails should NOT be connected. Their vision is at least 10x Too small. A vision of creating a national trail network for each type of recreation.



<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-957>

6:12



of all ages and abilities, and promised that it would be built far enough from roads and highways to protect users from deadly confrontations with motor vehicles;

- The Trans Canada Trail now includes 8,500 km of highway and roads, and 5,000 km of trail used by off-road motor vehicles;
- The Trans Canada Trail now includes 7,000 km of waterway, and 3,500 km of often impassable greenway;
- In 2012, while on a three-week Trans Canada Trail cycling holiday in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, Elizabeth Ann Sovis, 63, was struck and killed by a motor vehicle.

We, the undersigned, **Citizens of Canada**, call upon the **House of Commons** to to adopt a Trans Canada Trail Act that will establish minimum standards for quality and safety, and, in particular, will ensure that this trail (The Great Trail) is a genuinely non-motorized and world-class greenway.

 Government response tabled 

Government response tabled on December 6, 2017
(Sessional Paper No. 8545-421-171-02)

- [421-01774_ECCC_E.pdf](#)



Not a great petition.

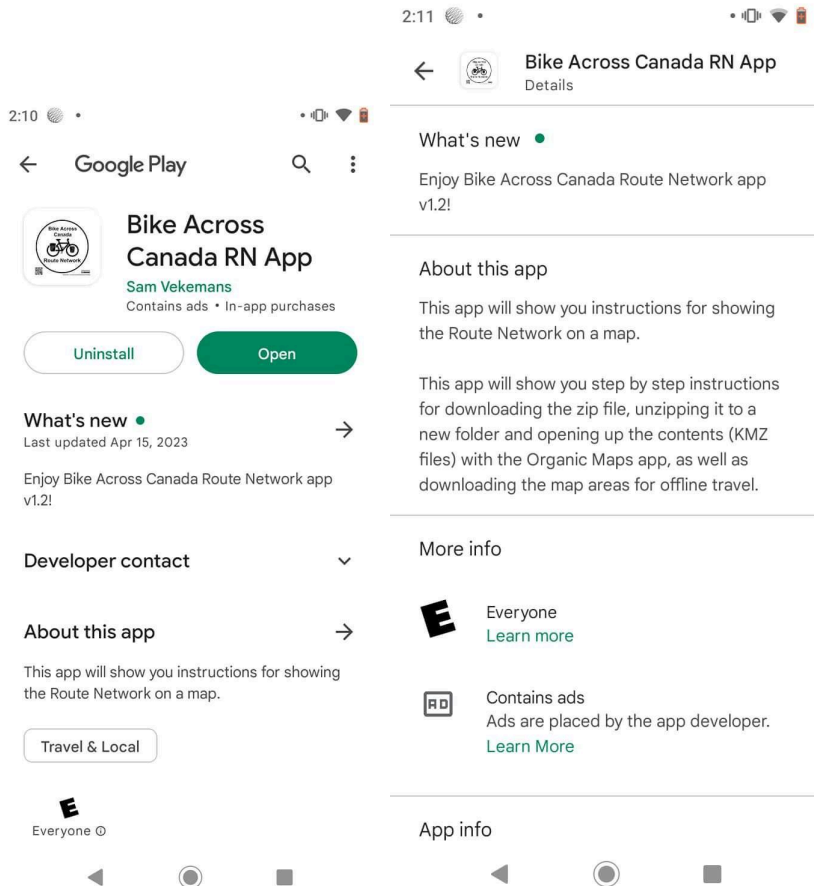
As the thing is 'Complete' they should not need funding. By it's own definition absolutely no physical infrastructure is needed since it caters to random users..

Dear local MP,

I'm writing today to ask for your opinion on if you will support the idea of building a National Cycling Route Network, and further, support a parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of the Trans Canada Trail and Trans Canada Trail / Sentier Canada National into the blocking of efforts to build a national cycling route network because the idea of a 'Multi-use trail across Canada' is simply a green washing

campaign supported by those who have never been on a bicycle. A multi-use trail, by definition, does not cater to any single mode of recreation but rather a random assortment of random things (can't call waterways trails) for random users is nonsense.

You can download the Bike Across Canada Route Network app available for Android smartphones https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.wBikeAcrossCanadaRouteNetworkappv12_16984567



*** Additional rant from October 10th 2023

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02ZzhtPNdvPCP6epFUd9JwCjGX6VyXvw6DPugPJShH2sS4RFdoYh9wQaiqZZLHVAXHI&id=116519335083835&mibextid=Nif5oz

Sadly, because the Trans Canada Trail Foundation has no clear vision (random 'trails' for random users) a dedicated National Cycling Route Network (preference to paved cycling paths) can't be built.

This is because the Trans Canada Trail Foundation has 3 well paid lobbyists in Ottawa who take funding AWAY from building proper cycling infrastructure.

If the TCT would focus on a single recreation, and promote themselves as a BANK (that's what they are) then it would allow for a National Cycling Route Network to exist.

Instead, the TCT just confuses cyclists from around the world.

Also, they have well paid media department that pays for their own attention. The Globe and Mail is a 'media partner'.

Fortunately, the Great Lakes Waterfront Regeneration Trust network is included in the zip file for the Trans Canada Bike Route app, so people can find it. ... As it's a dedicated cycling route. Has anyone ever wondered why Vélo Canada Bikes doesn't have 'Building a National Cycling Route Network' as part of their objectives? The answer is that the TCT gets in the way.

Also note that there is nothing wrong with "The Trans Canada Trail, Canada's National Footpath". This makes it clear that it's not a Hiking Trail, it's a walking route. Signage should be clear that it's walking - not hiking or any other recreation. This allows for Hike Canada en Marche to build a National Hiking Trail, and for 'Great Northern Bikepacking Trail' to exist, and for a National Equestrian Trail and a National Cycling Route to exist.

Meghan Newton Reddick Lolz.

You confuse people with the Random users. A 'Multi-use trail' is simply a poor excuse for not building proper cycling infrastructure. Different users should not be forced to use the same infrastructure. Instead, there should be dedicated paths and signage indicating where each recreation can go. Common TCT signage simply doesn't make sense.

Create designated signage - unique for each recreation and make it clear for what recreation is permitted and where each recreation can go.