Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) manages more than 1350 recreation sites and over 800 trails in all regions of the province. This extensive site and trail network is unique to British Columbia, and provides safe and enjoyable public recreation opportunities for local citizens and visitors from around the world.

Recreation sites and trails are a vital component of the provincial tourism infrastructure and play a significant role in the domestic tourism sector by providing economic opportunities for rural communities. They also help increase public awareness of environmental values and promote an active lifestyle for a healthier population.

RSTBC delivers the site and trail program through a headquarters in Victoria, four regional offices, and 19 districts located throughout the province. A large component of the program is delivered through partnership agreements with recreation groups, community organizations, First Nations, private citizens, local governments or forest companies.
Recreation Sites

Recreation sites provide an affordable, rustic camping experience that is different from that offered at provincial parks or commercial campgrounds, particularly for those who really like to get back to nature.

Generally located in remote areas and accessed by gravel forestry roads, most recreation sites provide basic facilities, such as toilets, fire rings and picnic tables. No electricity or potable water is provided.

Recreation Trails

BC’s recreation trails are world famous and range from basic, single-track paths through dense forest to wide-tracked rail trails with high quality tread surfaces.

There are also many heritage trails that trace the footsteps of early pioneers and provide an important historical and cultural perspective to outdoor recreation.
To effectively coordinate the development and management of BC’s extensive network of recreation trails, the Province has developed the Trails Strategy for BC. This strategy was developed with input from stakeholders from all sides of the recreation community and resulted in a collaborative approach to trail management in British Columbia.

“The Trails Strategy has been endorsed by government and will be implemented in phases as funding becomes available.”

**Summer Motorized Trail Use**

In addition to developing trails for primarily non-motorized use, RSTBC recognizes and appreciates the valuable social and economic contributions of motorized recreation and is working hard to develop more high quality trail opportunities for motorized users.

**Winter Motorized Trail Use**

Responding to recommendations from the BC Coroner’s Service, RSTBC, in collaboration with the Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) and GeoBC, has improved avalanche awareness in BC to ensure that winter recreationists are provided with the safety information they need to make informed decisions. Avalanche awareness signs have been posted at 23 key highway locations and standardized warning signs have been installed at all 91 public snowmobile trails currently managed by the Province.

On-site “Avaluator” signage has been developed and posted at public snowmobile trailheads to assist recreationists in assessing local avalanche dangers before they head out into the backcountry. Terrain guides for more popular snowmobile trails have also been produced to further educate recreationists on the importance of planning for and minimizing the risk associated with travel in avalanche prone terrain.
RSTBC has recently undertaken a project to restore abandoned fire lookouts and establish them as recreation sites to preserve the historical, cultural and heritage values of these spectacular areas and provide unique public recreation opportunities.

During the field season of 2012, a number of formerly abandoned lookouts were restored to their original structures and celebrated as part of the 100th anniversary of the BC Forest Service.

The result has been the development of a number of world-class mountain biking trail systems in collaboration with mountain bike associations and local communities. Communities like Burns Lake and Smithers in northwestern BC have developed significant mountain bike trail systems. These trail systems are now firmly established as international mountain bike destinations of choice.

For More Information

We’re on the Web at www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca

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