



Authorizing Construction and Maintenance Pilot Project

INFORMATION & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Effective April 1st, 2025, Recreation Sites and Trail B.C. (RSTBC) is piloting a modernized approach to authorizing the construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation of trails and recreation facilities. This document seeks to answer common questions related to the pilot and the new authorizations approach.

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1. *Why is RSTBC modernizing the approach to construction and maintenance authorizations?*

In recent years, RSTBC has been experiencing an increase in the number of proposals for authorizations, and in general, greater demand for recreation opportunities. This is coupled with greater complexities on the land base, and growing expectations on decision makers.

The current process to apply for and authorize the construction and maintenance of trails and recreation facilities is outdated and not user-friendly, applied inconsistently across the province, and does not provide decision makers with the information they need to make informed decisions that support effective recreation management and stewardship.

The modernized approach to authorizing construction and maintenance of trails and recreation facilities is intended to improve authorization processing efficiencies and enable better recreation developments, management and stewardship.

2. *Why is RSTBC undertaking a pilot of a new authorizations approach?*

To enhance service delivery and better support applicants throughout the authorization process, RSTBC is seeking feedback on the modernized approach to authorizing the construction and maintenance of trails and recreation facilities. While all feedback is welcome, we are particularly interested in feedback on the useability of the new application form and the clarity and effectiveness of guidance materials.

We are piloting this new process starting April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026. An extension of the pilot will be considered if necessary. Throughout the pilot, feedback will be collected and, when applicable, applied to improve the process so that it meets the needs of RSTBC staff and decision makers, as well as supports applicants and the public recreation community. Overall, this approach is meant to improve clarity of the requirements for applicants, improve application tracking across the province and provide overall better service to the public.

For information on how to provide feedback see [8. How can I provide feedback?](#).

3. *Why does RSTBC authorize construction and maintenance of trails and recreation facilities?*

Authorization under [section 57 of the Forest and Range Practices Act \(FRPA\)](#) is required to construct, maintain, or rehabilitate a trail or other recreation facility on public land. RSTBC is the agency responsible for providing these authorizations.

Authorization processes are central to RSTBC's ability to achieve its mandate of preserving and enhancing public access to, and enjoyment of, outdoor recreation experiences on public land. Authorizations are important tools for managing the intensity and scope of recreational activities on the land base, improving and maintaining recreation amenities valued by communities and community groups, mitigating conflicts, and reducing impacts. Decisions to authorize construction

and maintenance activities are guided by considerations of impacts to recreation values, public safety, Indigenous interests, the environment, and other resource values and users.

An authorization under section 57 of FRPA does not confer legal status to the trail or recreation facility itself, rather it authorizes the activities that may be undertaken to construct, maintain, or rehabilitate the trail or recreation facility. It may be helpful to think of these authorizations as analogous to a “temporary works permit”.

A wide range of activities, varying in scope and scale, are authorized by RSTBC under section 57 of FRPA. These can include standard maintenance of a hiking trail to complex projects such as the construction of a remote backcountry cabin.

4. The new process seems like a lot more work! Why is it like this?

The previous application form lacked the necessary details for decision makers to make informed decisions that support effective recreation management and stewardship. This led to frequent back-and-forth requests for more information, which added time and effort for both applicants and reviewers. The back-and-forth also led to challenges in tracking applications across the province. The updated application now asks for more details upfront, ensuring applicants have much greater clarity of what is required in their application. The new application also provides decision makers with everything they need from the start. While this may require more work initially, it will help ensure better, and often more efficient, application packages and decision-making - reducing delays and uncertainty for applicants.

To support applicants, comprehensive guidance is available to help complete the new application form.

Moreover, a risk-based approach is applied to improve application processing efficiencies (see [5. What is the risk-based approach?](#))

5. What is the risk-based approach?

A risk-based approach involves simplifying the process for applications which are not complicated. Applications like simple maintenance and repairs may fall into this category, as well as construction and maintenance activities proposed on established recreation sites and trails.

Partnership Agreement Holders proposing minor-complexity activities within an established recreation site or trail may not be required to submit an online application. If you are proposing an activity within an established recreation site or trail, contact the [Recreation District](#) to discuss your proposal and determine whether an online application may be required.

Proposed projects that are considered complex may require a more comprehensive review, extended referral and consultation timelines, and/or additional information requirements. The requirements defined in the new application process are not new. The application process is meant

to improve the understanding of the requirements of the application process up-front, rather than following a long and informal back-and-forth process.

Proposed projects that are not deemed complex may be subject to a simplified application and review process, including less information requirements on the application form and expedited review processes.

A proposed project may be deemed complex for a number of reasons including but not limited to: significant subsurface disturbance; engineering requirements (e.g., bridges, backcountry cabins); potential impacts to wildlife, wildlife habitats, and species at risk; a proximity to streams and other waterways; or an anticipated change in nature and amount of recreation use.

6. I recently submitted an application – Do I need to re-apply with the new application form?

All complete applications that were submitted on the former application form prior to April 1st, 2025, will be reviewed.

Any incomplete applications that have been submitted and not accepted by RSTBC will be returned to the applicant and will likely require re-submission on the new application form.

As of April 1st, 2025, all new applications for construction, maintenance, or rehabilitation of trails or recreation facilities must be submitted on the new online application form, unless the activities are of minor complexity and proposed on established recreation sites and trails (See [5. What is the risk-based approach?](#))

7. What about establishments under FRPA s.56?

The establishment of recreation sites and trails is out of scope of this pilot project.

Establishment under [section 56 of FRPA](#) is a decision which is internal to Government. Unlike construction and maintenance authorizations, the public cannot apply to have land established as a recreation site or trail. In many cases, construction and maintenance authorizations may be used in coordination with section 56 of FRPA (i.e., to develop, improve, or maintain established recreation trails, or recreation facilities on established recreation sites), though they may also be applied on their own, as a separate management tool, outside formally established recreation sites and trails.

8. How can I provide feedback?

Feedback may be provided by emailing RSTBC.Authorizations.Feedback@gov.bc.ca or by completing the optional survey at the end of the new application form.