

## **Premier Gordon Campbell**

### **Myra Canyon Trestle announcement**

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Today, I want to start by saying a huge thank you. It was just a little under a year ago that we first realized that the trestles were going to go. And I know the members of the Myra Canyon Restoration Society were devastated by that, and their sense of loss was shared not just here in the valley but all over the province. A little bit of our history was disappearing on us, and the forces of nature were taking it away.

But there's another force that's equally powerful, and that's the spirit of saying that we want to maintain our history; we want to make sure that we keep it here. It was kept alive by people in the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society. Today I hope that all of them and all the hours that they put in for years and years and years will continue to pay off, because they are going to guide us as we work to restore the trestles that were lost.

I want to say a huge thank you on behalf of all British Columbians to Ken Campbell, the former president of the society, and all the people who were part of it. Thank you, Ken.

I also want to thank Senator Ross Fitzpatrick who's here today representing the federal government. I should tell you all that he did not waver for one minute when we talked about the challenge that this project would create for us. He was a leader for each of us. Prime Minister Chrétien came: you'll recall that. The to-be Prime Minister Martin came, and I can tell you that the federal government has been here for us all along the way as part of the task force.

Last August 16, forest officials first detected the Okanagan Mountain Park fire. I can recall flying down through the valley. It was a phenomenon that I think no one can really comprehend. You can't comprehend it when you look at it on television. You can't understand it or feel it when you see it on the front page of a newspaper, even though it was on the front page of papers across the country.

A total of 12 of 16 trestles were eventually destroyed here, including trestle number 15 which is right behind us, and along with that, the decks of two steel trestles were also destroyed. It was a blow to everybody.

We all know that the Kettle Valley Trail drew about 50,000 tourists a year to this region, and \$5 million was put into the Okanagan economy.

But more important than all of that, it was part of the history of the region. It was part of reminding us of what people had to do to open up the province to create communities and to connect communities together.

That's why today I'm pleased to announce that the federal and provincial governments will invest \$13.5 million over three years to rebuild the trestles.

We expect work to begin in the fall at trestle #18, and eventually all the trestles will be rebuilt to reflect the style of the historic trestles that we lost. And by 2007, all 12 of the wooden trestles that were destroyed will be replaced and the two steel spans damaged will be repaired.

The project will be overseen by the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society. They have been responsible for the maintenance and restoration of the trestles since 1992. And they have now raised over \$400,000 in additional funding that will be used to beautify the trail as the trestles are reconstructed.

The determination, vision and spirit of partnership that built the Kettle Valley Railway and that built these trestles is the same spirit that built BC. It's the same spirit that we saw last summer as everyone came together to overcome the fires. And it's the same spirit that drove us all to work together and find a way to rebuild these trestles.

Just as the original trestles reflected the spirit of British Columbians a century ago, the rebuilt trestles will be a lasting legacy of what British Columbians were able to accomplish in this century and beyond.

Thank you very much.