

Fed cash for trail upgrading

By Marcel Tetrault
Echo Staff

Huband students will be able to avoid a busy rural road and still keep their boots dry thanks to a federal grant that will allow the Barbara Road Greenway to be upgraded.

The trail, which runs between Venture Road and Willis Way just north of Courtenay, is well used by area students traveling to Huband Elementary School.

The trail allows students to avoid walking along Venture Road, Huband Road and Willis Way and instead cut through the bushes, lopping about 75 per cent of the distance from that portion of their journey.

It is also used by students for outdoor exercise and area residents out for a walk.

"We certainly do like running in the woods and we, in past years, had been running in the woods quite a bit but due to a change in ownership of the land we haven't been able to," said Huband vice principal Katy Doran.

Unfortunately the trail goes through a wetland and, as such, floods frequently when it rains, becoming unusable.

"With this change, we can go back in the woods," said Doran. "It's a far better running experience for our students than on pavement. It's a lot safer as well."

Doran said the new trail will also help the school promote participation in Walking Wheeling Wednesdays, during which students are encouraged



Vancouver Island North MP John Duncan announces a federal contribution of \$36,220 towards a \$73,000 project to upgrade trails in the Huband Road area. Pictured, from left to right, are Duncan, Comox Valley Regional District parks technician Debbie Lister and CVRD board chair Greg Phelps.

to walk, carpool or take the bus to school.

The upgraded trail will run for 214 metres, with 154 metres of elevated boardwalk across the previously logged historic wetland. It will also include the replacement of an old log bridge, resurfacing of 60 metres of trail with gravel and the installation of a culvert.

"There have been a lot of people, for a long time, wanting to do this," said Jim Koehler, alternate regional director for Area B director

Jim Gillis. "It will give a lot of people pleasure for a long time."

The funding comes from the Recreational Infrastructure Canada program, a component of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

The federal government is providing \$36,220 for the upgrade. The remainder of the \$73,000 required for the project will be provided by local government.

mtetrault@comoxvalleyecho.com



This trail, well used by Huband School students, floods frequently in rainy weather. Nearby residents have placed these wooden pallets along the trail in an attempt to make it useable when the ground is wet, but they are clearly ineffective. The federal and local governments have now agreed to spend \$73,000 to build an elevated boardwalk that will allow the trail to be used year round.