

# Historic railway trestle reopened on Vancouver Island

[CBC News](#)

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[Reopening the Kinsol Trestle](#) 4:20

Vancouver Island residents turned out to celebrate the reopening of the Kinsol Trestle — the oldest free-standing timber structure in North America — as the latest addition to the Trans Canada Trail on Thursday. Hundreds of people from government, private and non-profit groups raised \$7.5 million to restore the derelict railway trestle that crosses the Koksilah River in the Cowichan Valley and turn it into a recreational route for hikers and cyclists.

The wooden structure is one of the largest timber bridges in the world and the highest timber trestle remaining in the Commonwealth at 44 metres high and 188 metres long.

The timber trestle was built in 1929 to link Victoria to Nootka Sound to transport timber. The last train crossed the trestle in 1979.

On Thursday it became a part of the Trans Canada Trail, connecting Shawnigan Lake with North Cowichan.

## A source of community pride

For residents like Tom Paterson, who led the fight to save it from demolition, it's more than a walking path — it's a sign of community pride.

"A popular movement to save something that was dear to the community galvanized into a rejuvenated Kinsol Trestle — may we do this again elsewhere," he said. The project manager was world-renowned heritage conservationist, Gord MacDonald, who hails from the area.

"This is really a world class structure and a secret of the Cowichan Valley, but I hope now more and more people will come here and have their socks blown off by its awesome scale," he said.

Provincial officials said the restoration work included replacing unsound timbers and reinforcing the structure to ensure that the historic characteristics, including the span, height and timbered design qualities of the original structure, were preserved.

In a symbolic gesture, the last spike on the Kinsol Trestle was driven in by former Duncan mayor Mike Coleman on Thursday after he won the privilege in a fundraising lottery.



*The Kinsol Trestle is one of the largest timber bridges in the world and the highest timber trestle remaining in the Commonwealth at 44 metres high and 188 metres long. (Lisa Cordasco/CBC)*



*The restored Kinsol Trestle was reopened on Thursday on Vancouver Island. Lisa Cordasco/CBC*