



Caption Boothroyd  
caption here please  
this caption



Caption Boothroyd  
caption here please  
caption

BY DONNA BARKER | PHOTOS PAUL LUCAS

# Building ra and comm

## A new bike park for the Boothroyd Indian Band local kids to do much more th

It's 8:30 on a Saturday morning in July, just a few kilometres north of Boston Bar. The day is clear and promises to be a scorcher. In a dirt pit just a stone's throw from the Boothroyd Indian Band office, five men stand among shovels, saws, hammers, nails and a truckload of two-by-fours.

Patrick Lucas, one of the five BC Aboriginal Youth Mountain Bike Program volunteers, watches a child ride by on a path above them. The child disappears into the trees. Then another, and another. Lucas and his colleagues are concerned – not about the safety of these young riders – but that he and his fellow volunteers will be left to work alone in the sandpit, building a mountain bike park that the youth of the Boothroyd Indian Band have helped design.

“Next thing you know, there are a dozen kids riding around, circling us like sharks. And then they all swarmed down, a great ball of energy whipping around us, grabbing shovels, hammers, wood, saws,” says Lucas. “These kids were unstoppable. They worked two full days and ran us ragged. They were just so happy to be building the bike park that they'd all contributed to envisioning for their community.”

Jerome Campbell, age 12, attended every planning meeting, saying he “went for fun. To watch how the older people do it.” The fact was that the “older people” needed young people like Jerome and his cousin Damon, who also attended the meetings, since this mountain bike park is for them, and much of its success lies in the kids being included in its design and construction.

“They showed us pictures of other parks and we told them what we wanted, like a pump track,” says Jerome. “You can race your friends on it. It's fun. And it was fun to help build the park. There's a real reward in building what we helped think up.”



# mps unity

## Boothroyd Indian Band is teaching an grinds and flips



Caption Boothroyd  
caption here please  
caption; (Above):  
caption here please  
caption for these



In total, 38 people came out to dig and hammer (and cook four meals for the dirty diggers and hot hammerers) and to reap the rewards of being part of building this community mountain bike park.

On the surface, it may be hard to see why Vancouver Foundation would contribute \$15,000 to shape dirt piles and build jumps, a pump track and a wooden “learning” square in a community where kids can ride their bikes almost anywhere. But dig just a little and the true value of this repurposed dirt pit becomes crystal clear.

Doug Detwiler, founder of the non-profit organization Sprockids and a key volunteer with Lucas in designing and building this bike park, speaks from 20 years of experience using mountain biking to help young people develop skills, attitudes and interests that the school curriculum just isn’t designed to deliver.

“Lots of kids think they have no power. The whole project in Boothroyd was empowering for the young people who got involved, from the initial design meetings to now using the park and choosing what features they’ll ride. They may not realize it, but when they ride they’re showing their power, self-control, the ability to do something that’s not easy, and with that comes feelings of success. In the bike park or out on the trails, they can get dirty and shout and have fun – just be happy, active kids.”

Looking forward, both Detwiler and Lucas are committed to continuing to work with the Boothroyd Indian Band to help spin out the next stages of the community’s connection to mountain biking. In the short term, a series of mountain

bike trails will be developed in and around Boothroyd, providing more opportunities for both young people and adults to get outside, “whoop and holler” together and continue to develop a new passion for being outdoors.

Michael Campbell, a Band Council member, says, “We

have some old logging roads and walking trails that start just outside some of the houses in Boothroyd. People still use these trails for picking berries and mushrooms and for travelling to fishing spots. Our community has people trained in environmental monitoring so we’re all working together, with people like Patrick Lucas and Doug Detwiler, to make sure the new bike trails we’re planning don’t disturb plants or mushrooms.”

Lucas adds, “Mountain bikers are great partners for small First Nations communities because we share their traditional respect and stewardship for the land and we offer new, fun and challenging ways to engage with nature. It’s hard to get young people outside, away from television and video games. The bike park, and the new trails we’re planning, are getting more people – not just the kids – back out on the land.”

Michael Campbell agrees and shares a vision of an even longer-term goal that starts in the new mountain bike park, and travels 53 kilometres northeast along a traditional trading route from the Mehatil River watershed northeast to the Stein Valley.

This new project will take years of planning and the engagement of more community members to make it a reality. But talking to young Jerome – who is now leading the research and proposal writing for a paintball park in Boothroyd – it’s easy to see how being part of the bike park project has empowered him to take a leadership role in his community.

This project is proof that a small group of thoughtful, committed youth, with visionary mentors, can change the world – or at least a small part of it. More surprising is that a mountain bike park was the catalyst for this change – that while building ramps in Boston Bar, these youth were also building community. **VF**

If you would like to support this type of community building project, call Kristin Helgason in Development and Donor Services at 604-629-5186.

