



GREEN JOBS INITIATIVE

Success Story

Wood boardwalk at Inverness Beach

Green Job Lays Foundation for Town's Trails Strategy

KARLEE MACNEIL LOVES BEING outdoors and exploring different trails to walk or hike. But she never fully realized how much work went into maintaining them.

When she started her role as a Trails Programmer for the County of Inverness in Nova Scotia, the experience completely transformed the way she looks at trail systems - and made her appreciate the effort goes into them.



INVERNESS,
NOVA SCOTIA

Canada

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Karlee MacNeil enjoying the outdoors in Glencoe, Nova Scotia

“It was nice to see that this sort of position was open not just for students, but for younger people like me... it’s been really hard to find opportunities like this to get into the workforce.”

Karlee MacNeil,
Trails Programmer for the
County of Inverness in Nova Scotia

“There’s actually a lot going on behind the scenes,” says Karlee, whose job was supported by the CPRA Green Jobs Initiative, which is funded in part by the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment Skills Strategy program. “There are a lot of little organizations that are doing their part, and a lot of people who are passionate about keeping these trails usable and making sure they’re sustainable.”

In her role, Karlee has created a survey for the trails’ users and management groups to help the town learn more about how the trails are being managed, in addition to what is working well and improvements that need to be made.

“It’s definitely given me a chance to work on my communication skills, and making sure everybody’s on the same page because we’re working with a lot of different individual groups,” says Karlee, who also has an Environmental Engineering Technology degree as well as a diploma in Environmental Applied Science.

Karlee initially applied for the job because she is an active trail user, and with her educational background, she felt it would be the perfect fit.

“The main thing that drew me to this job was the ‘trails’ part in the title,” she says, adding that it’s particularly difficult finding similar jobs for recent graduates. “It was nice to see that this sort of position was open not just for students, but for younger people like me. I just graduated, and it’s been really hard to find opportunities like this to get into the workforce.”

Charlotte MacDonald, manager of the County of Inverness’s recreation department, says Karlee’s work has provided the basis for the municipality’s formalized trails strategy.

She adds that this work will help the community improve its trails, and trail experiences, for the County of Inverness’s residents and visitors.

“This survey is going to give us the data we need to support our trail strategy, and to support departmental programming out on the trails, as well as our trail users in the county,” she says. “The stronger the connection we have with our trail development groups, the better product and the better service we will be able to offer. Without Karlee, we wouldn’t have created the survey, and we wouldn’t have this step done.”

MacDonald says that the funding has also allowed the small rural municipality to fill a role that may not have otherwise existed, and supported the hiring of a recent graduate who has new ideas and perspectives.

“Without the green jobs program, I’d have to wait for budget development and get approval - and maybe not even get it,” she explains. “We’re a small municipality so if the money isn’t there, it’s not there. Karlee’s work will definitely have a positive impact to the whole community, and especially its trails.” 🍁