

Environmental Assessment Registration

Portugal Cove South To Cape Race



Town Of Portugal Cove South

January 2024

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Figure 12: Example of the culvert that will be placed in the small stream.

2. NAME OF UNDERTAKING

Multipurpose Trail - Portugal Cove South to Cape Race

PROPONENT:

Name of Corporate Body: Town of Portugal Cove South
P.O. Box 8, Site 11
62 Harbour Road
Portugal Cove South, NL
Email: townofpcs@live.ca
Telephone: 709-438-

Chief Executive Officer:

Name: Clarence Molloy
Official Title: Mayor

Principal Contact Person for purposes of environmental assessment:

Name: Lucas Ward
Official Title: Deputy Mayor
Phone: 709-765-8302
Email: lucasward_12@hotmail.com

3. THE UNDERTAKING:

Purpose/Rationale/Need for the Undertaking:

The town of Portugal Cove South (PCS) would like to connect and register two historical multipurpose trails that will run from Portugal Cove South to Cape Race as one. The total distance will equal 25 km of trail. However only approximately 5900 metres require any construction which includes minor widening, grubbing and brush cutting.

The trail that extends from PCS to Dunphy's Break is all part of the old Southern Shore highway that ran to Cappahayden until the 1930's and was then upgraded and used by the American Military during World War II. This section of trail actively used by hikers, ATV users and cabin owners, requires very little work and maintenance to keep sufficiently accessible.

The trail extending from Cape Race to Clam Cove is part of another historical trail known as the Marconi Telegraph path which ran to Cappahayden as well. This trail like the other is actively used by hikers, ATV users and cabin owners and also requires little work and maintenance to keep sufficiently accessible.

The proposed multipurpose trail intends to grant access and interconnect both aforementioned trails. If registered, the Town Of PCS will have about a 5km stretch of trail to conduct some brush cutting, some minor excavating and the construction of a single bridge to cross Clam Cove River.

With this proposal, the Town of PCS intends to expose the historical significance and increase tourism of this area by establishing a safe and scenic trail system that is accessible to users of all backgrounds.

DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING

Geographical Location

The proposed multi-use trail is located between the access points of Town of Portugal Cove South and Cape Race River. The coordinates for the starting and ending of the trail are 46.71412° N, 53.24864° and 46.66965 N, 53.07957° W respectively. These access points do not require any construction or widening and are both accessible by road areas available for vehicle parking if necessary. This trail will not intersect with Chance Cove Provincial Park and it's buffer zone or Clam Cove Archaeological site. Location maps of the trail are attached. See Figures 1 through 9..

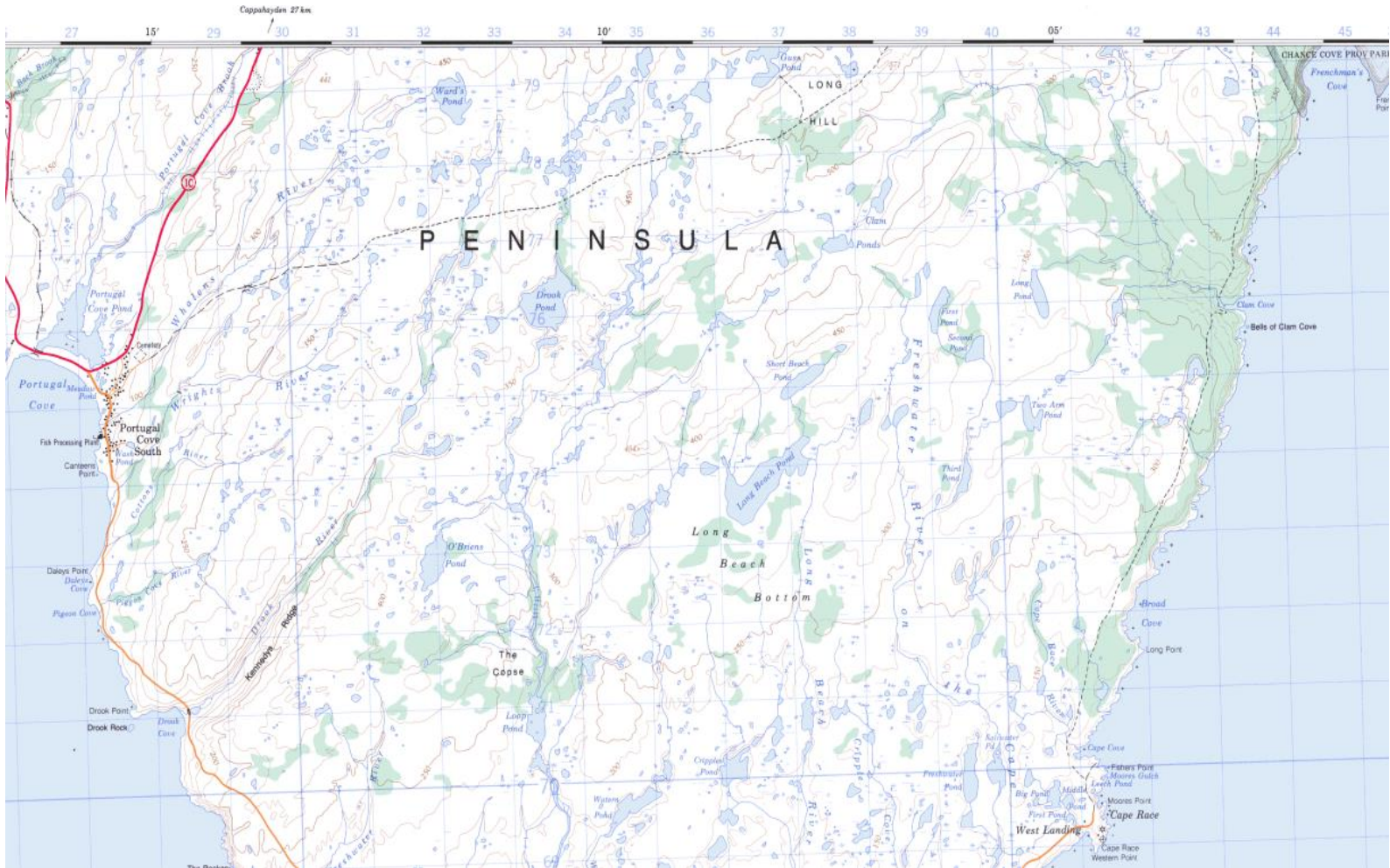


Figure 1: Entirety of trail to occupy. Indicated by dotted line. (Topographic)

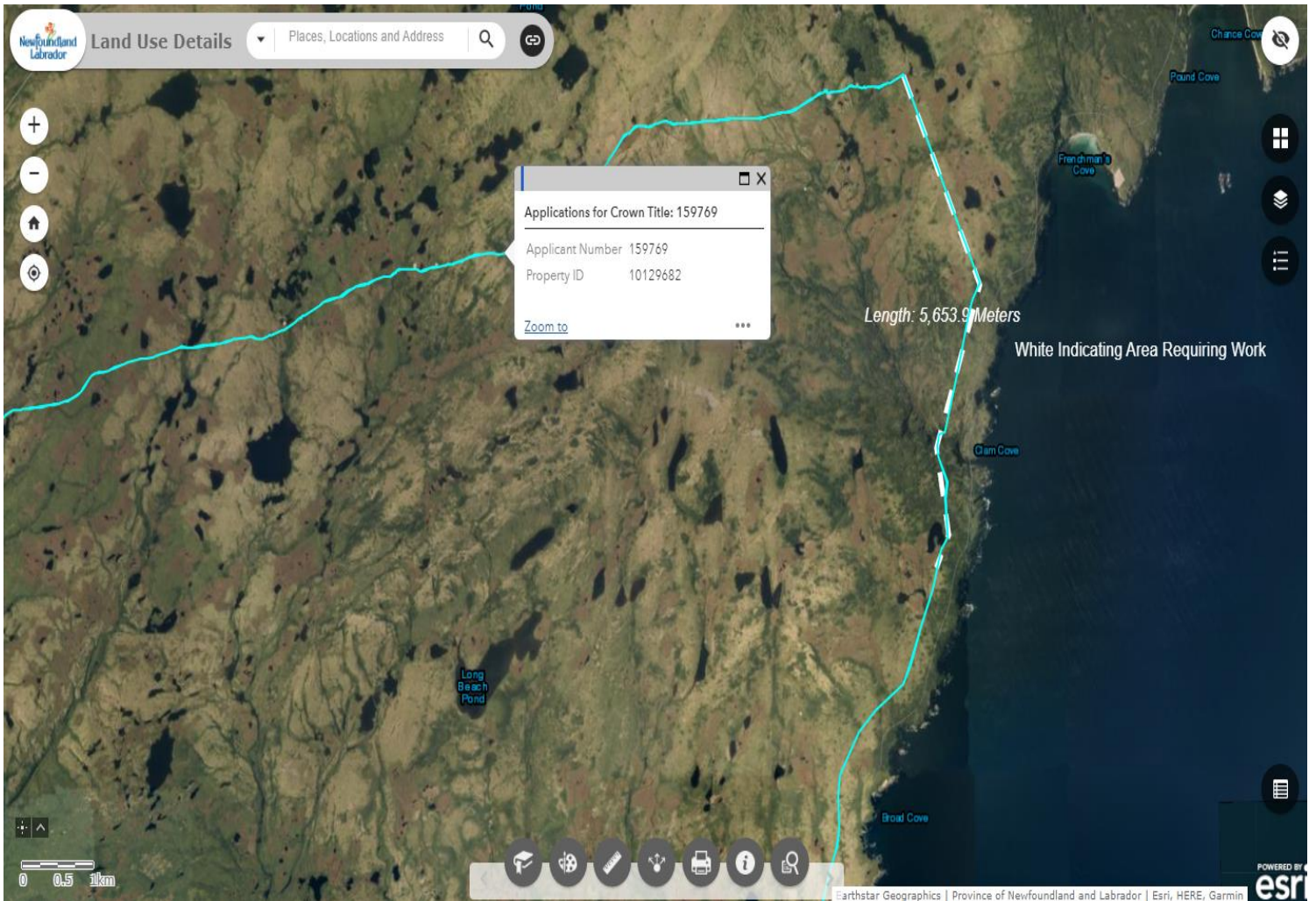


Figure 2: Most of the trail to occupy with highlighted section requiring work indicated by white dashes. (NL Atlas Imagery)



Figure 3: Cape Race access point with blue line indicating river crossing avoiding Clam Cove archaeological site. (Topographic)

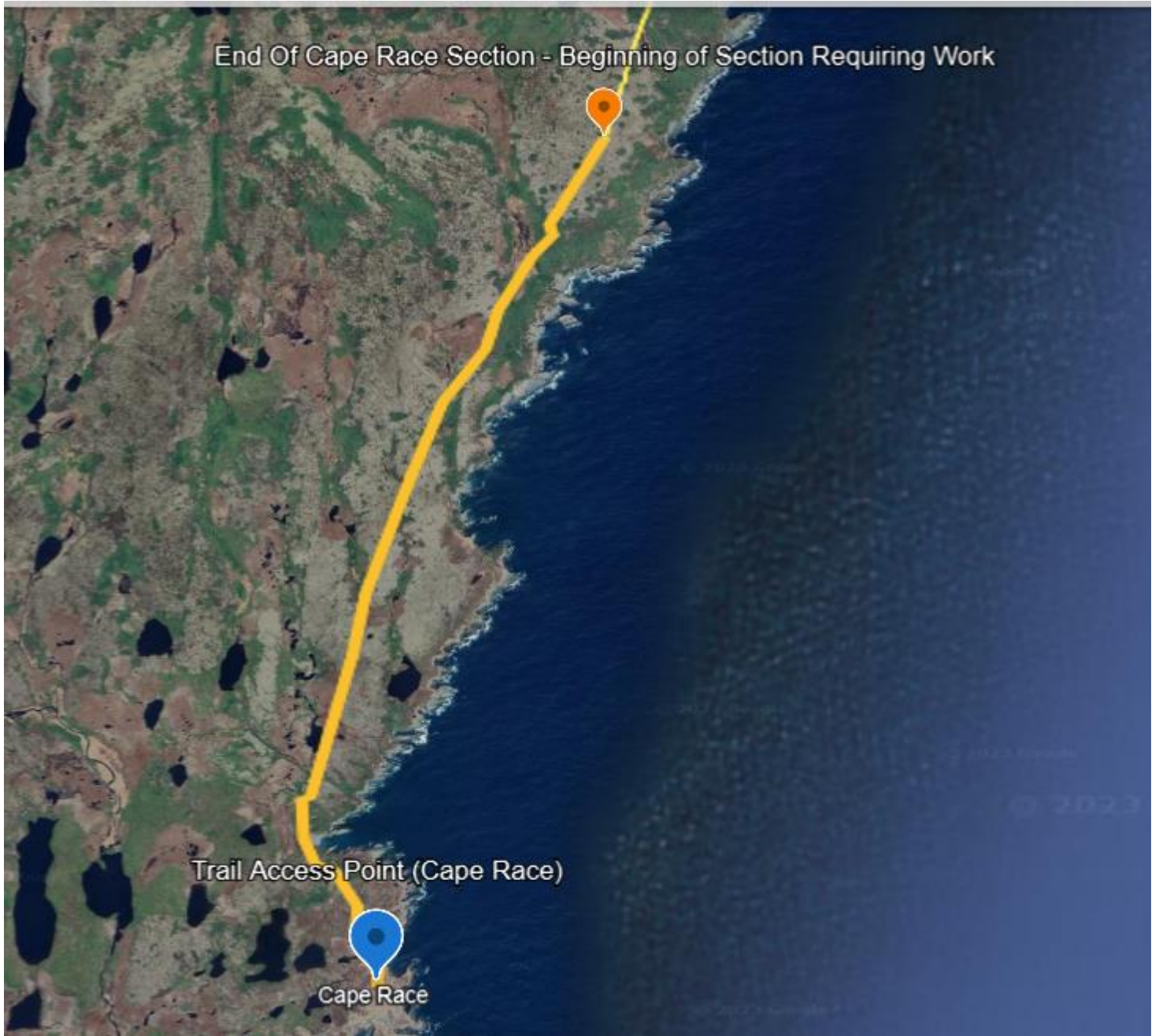
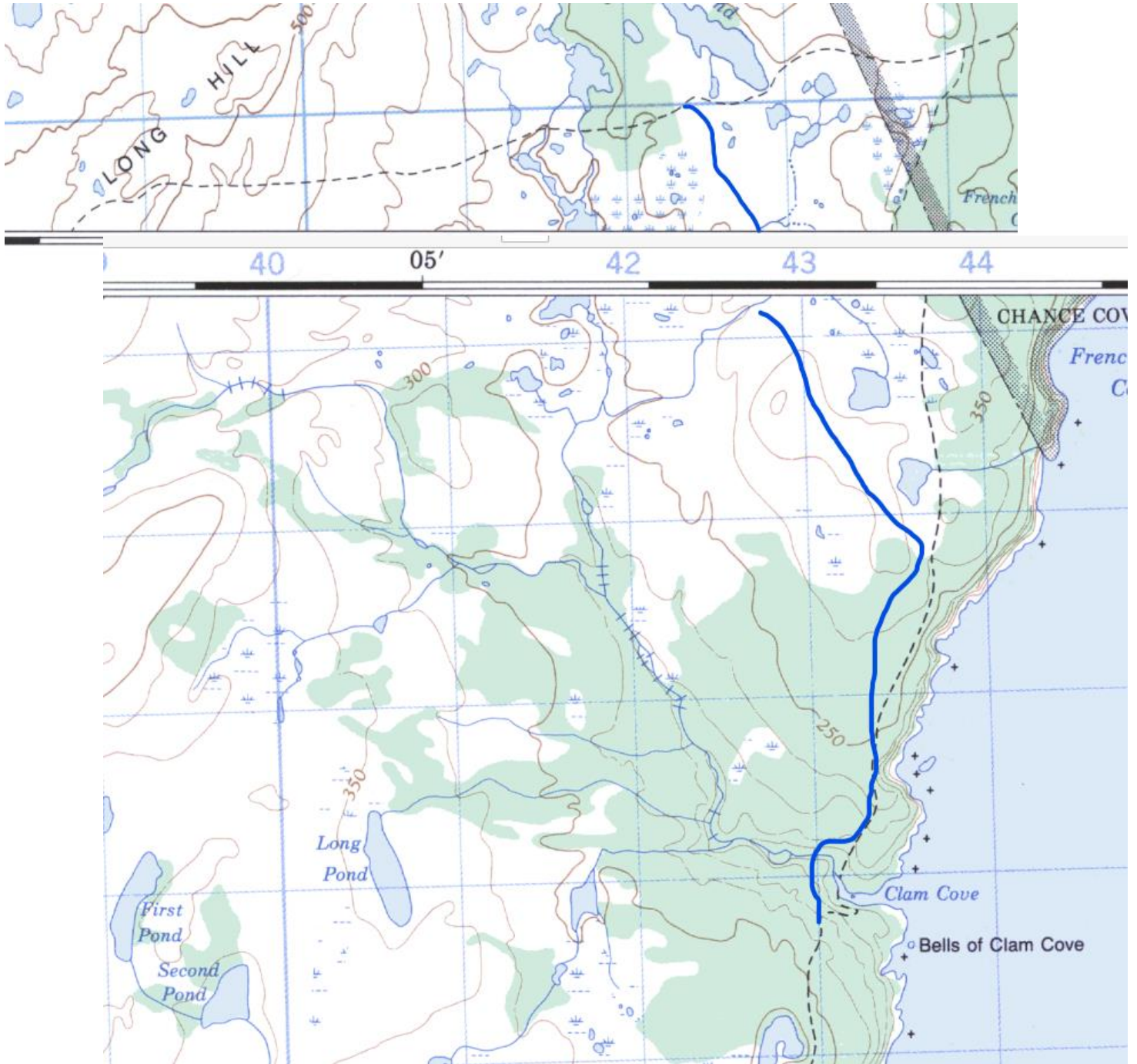


Figure 4: Cape Race access point and orange pinpoint indicating where construction/maintenance begins. (Google Earth)



Figures 5 and 6: Portion of trail requiring any construction or maintenance indicated by blue line.
 Blue line stops at areas joining existing trail. (Topographic)
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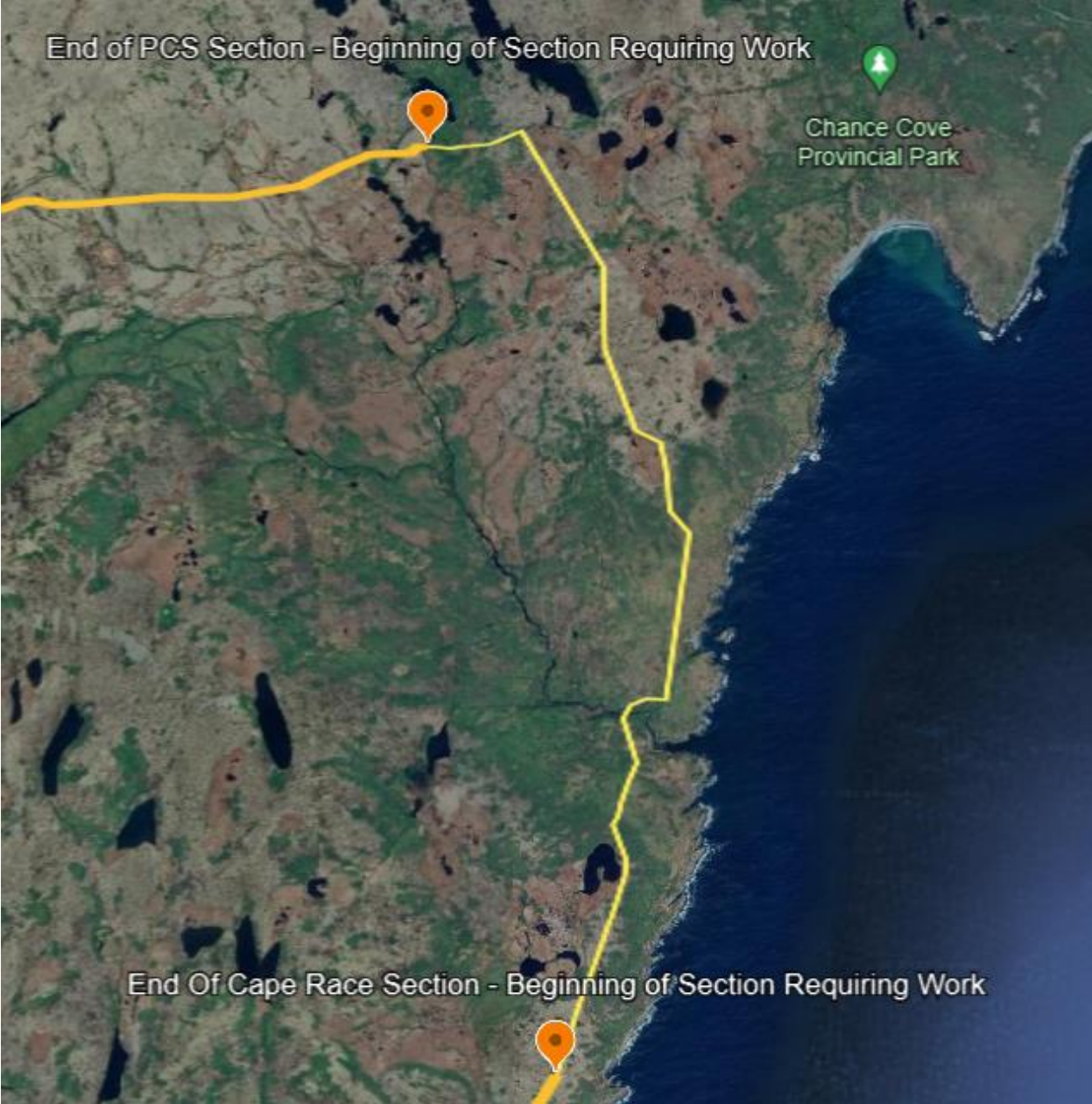


Figure 7: Portion of trail requiring any construction/maintenance indicated by yellow line between orange pinpoints. (Google Earth)

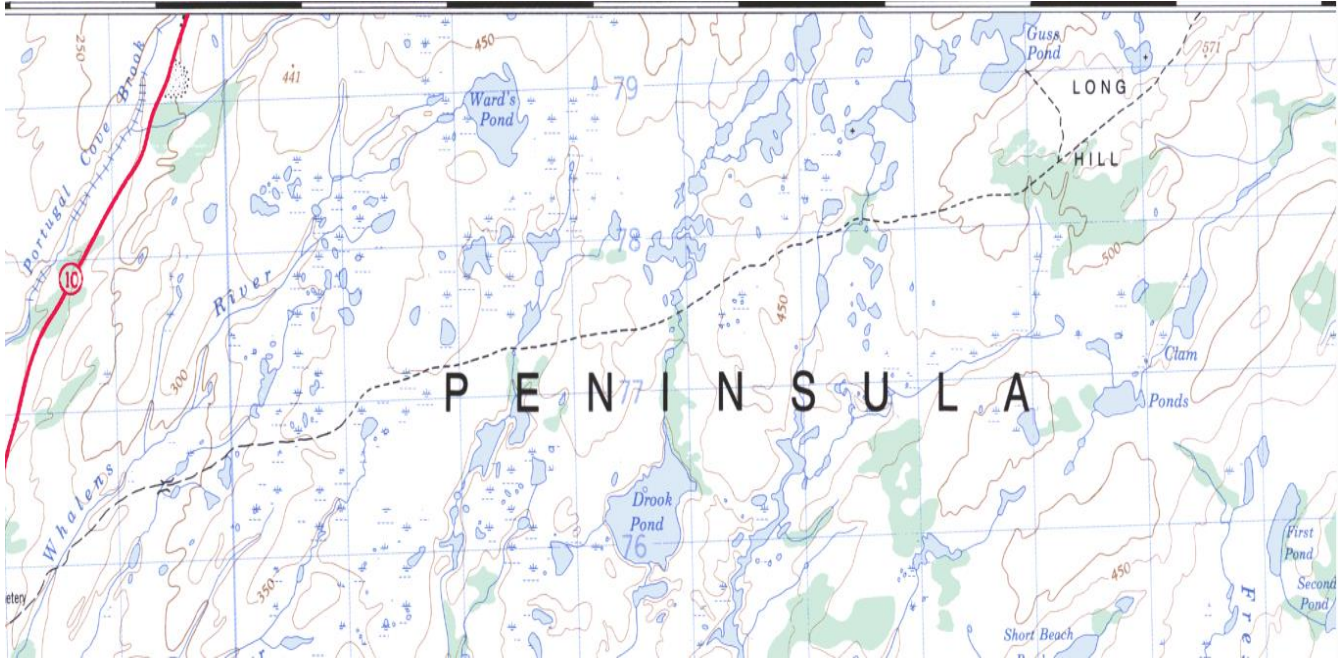


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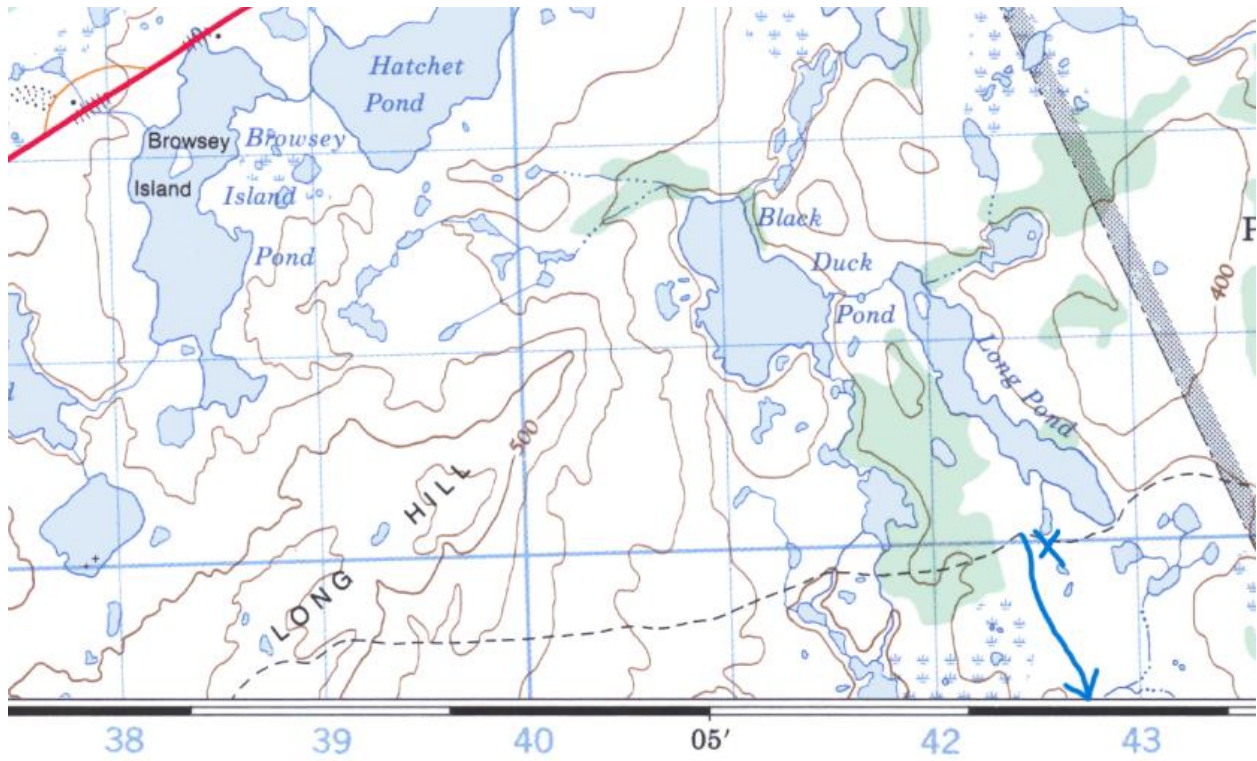


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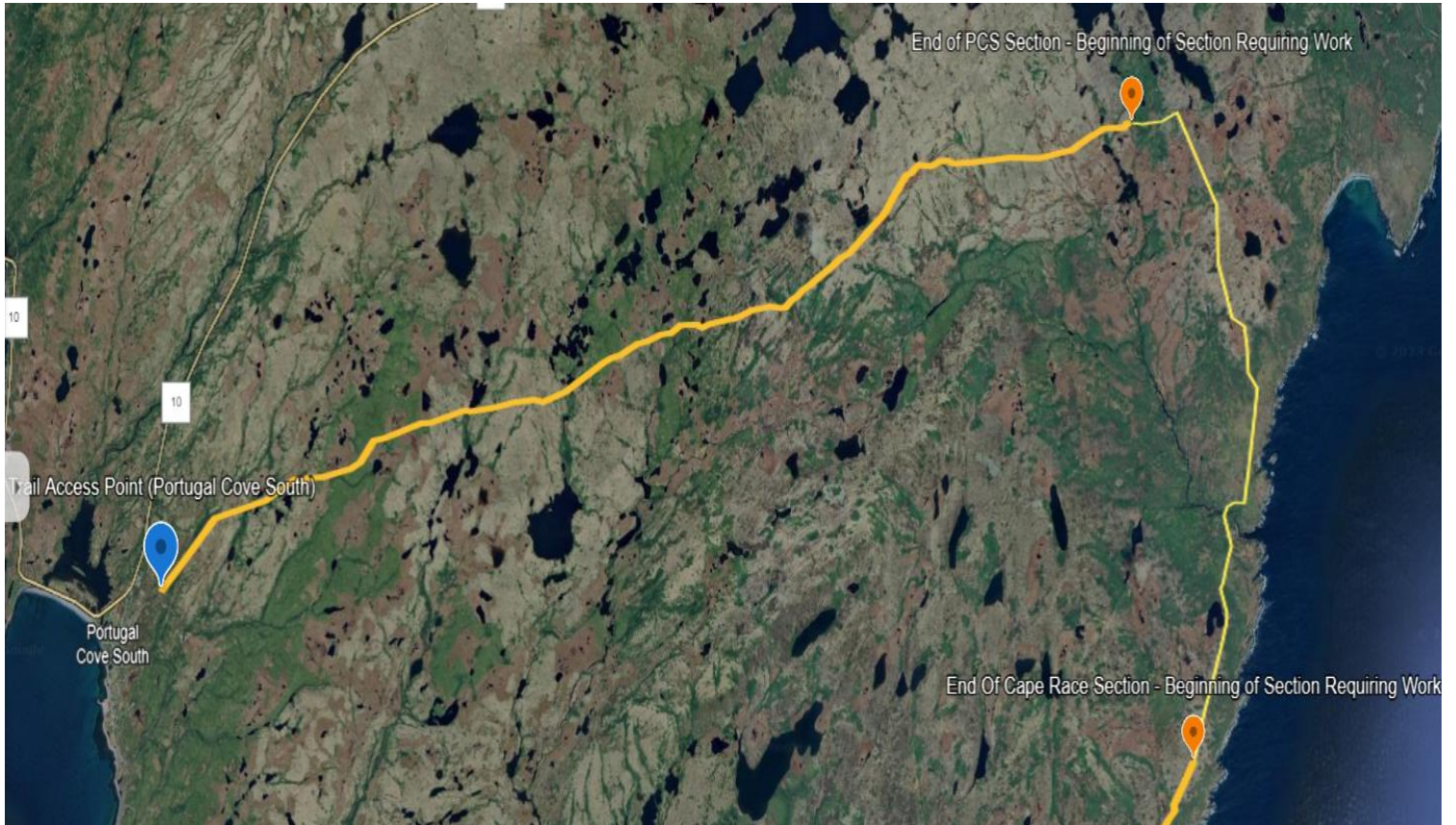


Figure 10: Portugal Cove South access point(Blue pin) and most of trail. Area requiring any construction/maintenance indicated by thin yellow line in between two orange pinpoints. (Google Earth)

Crown Land that is applied for borders the East Coast Trail buffer zone in the Cape Race section. The East Coast Trail board of directors have given us permission to intersect their buffer zone for trail use if necessary.

The proposed route, both existing and new segments have been scouted for suitability of course and condition. In the maps above, the best possible route with least amount of disturbance and maintenance is outlined.

Physical Features

The trail will mainly use the existing ~19 km of trail that requires no construction. The additional and desired ~5.7 km connection trail to the existing trail will require little construction to cross small streams or muddy areas. We will minimize environmental impact by avoiding wetlands or bogs.

The majority of the land cover the trail will pass through is the Eastern Hyper-Oceanic Barrens. The key floral species of these barrens are Black Crowberry, Creeping Juniper, Blueberry and Partridgeberry. The key fauna include Willow Ptarmigan, Savannah Sparrows, shrews voles and birds of prey like Northern Harrier.

The main types of forest include a section of boreal forest with a small portion of mostly Balsam Fir, with some White Spruce and Black Spruce.

Key fauna species for the forested area include Moose, Eastern Coyote, Red Fox, Snowshoe Hare, Red squirrel and some species of Warbler, Sparrows, Northern Flicker, and several species of hawk. Bird species are limited to standard Boreal Forest types - crows, gray jays, boreal chickadees, etc. Ruffed Grouse have also been observed in the area. Rare sightings of Woodland Caribou have been reported in recent years in nearby areas. Fish habitat is typical of ponds and streams found on the Avalon. Wildlife mitigation practices will include observing and scouting for any nesting or burrows. If nesting or burrowing is observed, the trail will avoid these areas. For example, if a tree has signs of nesting life like a woodpecker hole, that tree will not be cut and avoided even if it requires a turn in the pathway. No cutting will occur within 200 metres of an osprey or bald eagle nest (or any other nesting raptor for that matter) during nesting season.

There are no buildings within the parameters of the trail. The trail in whole, will be approximately 25,000 metres in distance x 2 metres wide. The proposed route that requires construction crosses mostly barren terrain with a small portion of boreal forest. There will be no crossing of any marsh/wetlands. The additional and desired 6km connection to the existing trails will bypass wetlands and any sensitive areas such as Chance Cove Provincial Park and Clam Cove archaeological site, therefore also minimizing any impact on any living species; however, this 5km section will require brush cutting to provide a clear cut trail 2 meters wide as well the narrow crossing of clam cove river.

Construction

The existing portions of this trail will not require any maintenance or upkeep at this time. The existing portions are solid rock and gravel terrain. As previously mentioned, the main portion was the old Southern Shore highway which was upgraded by the American Military in the 1940's. The Cape Race to Clam Cove portion was the old Marconi Telegraph path. Both were designed with a sufficient standard with durability in mind. There may be structural work required in the future for the bridges only. Culverts already in place are industrial grade plastic and will not collapse. When required for structures to be repaired, the volunteers will bring lumber to the site by ATV and trailer, where it will be sawed and placed appropriately. Construction of the new segment will mostly take place with surface grubbing of the peat with a mini-excavator. The excavator will be operated by a trained professional with proper licence and permits. The limited use of chainsaws will result in airborne emissions but will be of a very low quantity. Although a possibility exists of gasoline and/or oil being released onto the ground or into nearby water sources while equipment is being operated, measures will be in place to prevent such instances from occurring (i.e., spill response kit on site with the work crew, refueling operations being carried out a minimum of 30 meters away from a water source, etc.). A risk of wildfire is possible but again measures will be in place to prevent and/or control such events from happening (i.e., fire bag suppressant present on the chainsaw operator, fire extinguisher on site, stoppage of work during elevated fire hazard ratings, etc.). A strict "pack in/pack out" policy will be in place for all human generated waste that is created while work is being carried out. Where the mini excavator and ATVs will be used in the construction process, they will be restricted mainly to the transport and placement of materials.

There is one stream that requires an approximately 4 meter long bridge, and only one small stream that will require a plastic culvert.

The bridge will be constructed by hand with limited environmental impact. We will ensure as little disruption as possible to all existing waterways to prevent creating water borne sediment. We will ensure the culvert and bridge that are required to be installed are done so per current Water Resources Management Division and DFO regulations, policies and guidelines. Sediment control barriers such as filter fabric will be placed in areas where potential erosion may occur. Erosion control measures such as rip rapping will be used. Any equipment used near streams and other water bodies will be inspected for oil and fluid leaks. Again, spill kits will be on site at all times during construction. Construction of the bridge will consist of a gabion cage placed on either river bank, then filled with rock already harvested from trail work. There will be cast iron tresses approximately 4 meters long laid out and secured on gabion cages as main supports. The bedding of and railing of the bridge will be assembled by hand with lumber, using hand tools.

During construction, there will be a placement of a single plastic culvert in a small stream and secured with rock. It will be installed and covered using the materials collected on site. As most of the work is conducted with a single mini-excavator, impact on the environment is expected to be minimal.



Figure 11: Example of a bridge design that will be similar to our crossing of Clam Cove river. Though Gabion cages will be used instead of cement for rock cribbing.



Figure 12: Example of the culvert that will be placed in the small stream.

Wildlife species may be deterred from utilizing the area while work is ongoing due to noise and odours (i.e., exhaust fumes). Such impacts are short term in nature and workers will be constantly changing location as work progresses. Since most of the trail route already exists, no large-scale tree removal will be necessary. Larger trees will be left standing. Only the vegetation that exists on the trail or has fallen across it will be disturbed. To mitigate/minimize airborne emissions, the excavator and ATVs and chainsaw will not remain idling during work breaks. Vegetation debris and grubbed material cleared during the construction and maintenance of the trail will be laid out in a row adjacent to the trail.

There are no potential sources of pollutants other than a hand operated chainsaw, ATV's for material transport and mini excavator. Fuels are to be stored and poured properly eliminating any possibility of spill. A spill kit will also be located on site. Any physical trash to be bagged and brought out of the area disposed of efficiently to the government waste disposal site.

This proposed project was discussed at a town council meeting with a vote of all in favor to apply for a license to occupy. No concerns or potential conflict have arisen pertaining to this project.

Every effort will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts on native wildlife species. No large bodies of water will be in close proximity

Operation

The trail will be operated by cabin owners, hunters, berry pickers, hikers, mountain bikers and all outdoor enthusiasts. This trail will be operated year round as a multi-purpose trail and utilized for walking, biking, cycling, snowshoeing, and ATVs/Side by Sides. Maintenance may include filling of potholes or bridge repairs. With regards to navigation, wayfinding signs will be placed along the trail, along with storyboards in key locations to give users historical knowledge of the area. Maintenance for the trail will be covered by fundraising initiatives and donations but mostly performed by volunteers such as local cabin owners. Assessments by local trail users will be reported back to the Town as deemed necessary. Any river crossings will be assessed yearly by a Town council member and maintained as necessary. Potential causes of resource conflicts: potential sources of pollutants during operation of trail would be emissions from ATVs. The only group that would require consultation are East Coast Trails Association which have already given support for areas that may intersect their buffer zone.

The access points of the trail are quite easily accessible for any vehicle. Though no passenger vehicles use the proposed trail, (only ATVs) the Town will place boundary stone at the beginning of each section to thwart vehicles larger than ATVs/Side by Sides. This ensures the safety of abiding trail users and helps to maintain the integrity of the trail.

4. Occupations

Only one operator will be hired to complete work with a mini-excavator. The operator hired has a license to operate equipment and is up to date on all courses and requirements. Construction of trail will be done by volunteers in accordance with the National Occupational Classification codes for the construction of the trail are as follows; 7521.0 – Heavy Equipment Operator (except Crane) 8421.0 – Chainsaw Operator Operation: One chainsaw operator will have a completed chainsaw safety course and operators will wear proper PPE at all times.

5. Schedule:

Project construction is scheduled to begin March 2024. This date was selected based on the hope that all necessary approvals will be granted by this date allowing work crews to commence activities along the trail route. At the latest, work should be started by April. Due to the non-intrusive nature of this undertaking, we do not anticipate any interruption to bird breeding activities or habitat. There were no noted bird breeding locations identified during the trail scouting process. The following practices will be applied which may have an impact on the project schedule: Before trail clearing, advance trail scouting will be completed to determine if disruption to bird habitat is a possibility. Protective buffers will be applied to any identified bird breeding habitats or nests. Limit vegetation removal to the trail route only. If migratory bird nests/habitats are discovered, work in those areas will be completed after August 1.

6. Approval of the Undertaking

An application for crown title (License to occupy Application #159769) for the proposed trail has been submitted to the regional lands office of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture and the application is under review.

It is anticipated that the following organizations/government departments will be contacted for permits/approvals where and as required:

- Department of Environment and Climate Change
 - Environmental Assessment Division
 - Water Resources Management Division
 - A permit for any alteration to a water body for any stream crossings, bridges/culverts, etc.
- Crown Lands- permission to occupy trail
- Government Service Centre
- Department of Fisheries , Forestry and Agriculture

Signature of proponent/Chief Executive Officer

7. Funding


The estimated cost of this undertaking is \$7000. This money is raised completely by local trail user donations and volunteer fundraising.

8. Project Related Documents

Applies for Crown Title (License to occupy Application #159769) to the Regional Lands Office

January 26/2024

Date:



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Wood', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

Signature of proponent/Chief Executive Officer